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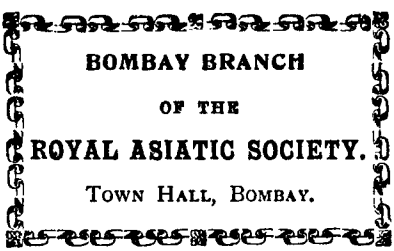

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MAWKEN PEOPLE OF THE MERGUI ARCHIPELAGO
WITH A DESCRIPTION OF
THEIR WAYS OF LIVING, CUSTOMS, HABITS,
BOATS, OCCUPATIONS,
&c., &c., &c.

BY
WALTER GRAINGE WHITE, F.R.G.S.
Member of the Oxford University Anthropological Society

WITH A FOREWORD BY
R. R. MARETT, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.A.I.
University Reader in Social Anthropology, Oxford

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FOREWORD

WHEN Mr White came to Oxford to read a paper on the Mawken before our Anthropological Society, most of us had hitherto never heard of those people, at any rate under that name. Thereupon, having gauged his attitude towards wild folk in general, I gladly promised to furnish any book that Mr White should write about them with an introductory note, not because I was in any way competent to supplement the information collected by him, but simply in order to associate myself with an enterprise that I felt to be useful. For surely it is useful in the highest degree to everyone who takes an interest in his fellow-men that he should be taught to respect them even when their circumstances are lowly. These Mawken are, to judge by externals, scarcely better off than the mud-fish on which they live. To accompany our author on a trip in one of their reeking dug-outs is a trying experience, even when but imagined from the depth of an arm-chair. Nevertheless, as we follow Mr White in his efforts to make friends with the Mawken, we find ourselves becoming friendly towards them too.

This book, then, in my view at least, is thoroughly anthropological in spirit, because all anthropology, whether pure or applied, has its root in human sympathy. *Hoc fundamentum rei est.* Human nature is only to be understood from within. The supreme object of the study of our fellow-man is to join souls with him. Nor is such contact so difficult to achieve as it might at a first glance seem. The natural bridge of souls is

language. Having this faculty in common, human beings are capable of spiritual intercourse, whatever material barriers otherwise may tend to impede the process. Mr White went the right way to work in seeking to master the Mawken tongue. He soon found—as everyone discovers who is at pains to converse with a primitive people in their own idiom—that the workings of the human mind are much the same in all of us. He and his friend Nbai conversed freely to their mutual profit. I wonder which of them learnt more that was of value to him.

Meanwhile the problem of effectively joining souls is complicated by the fact that success depends on the social no less than on the individual make-up of the minds that meet. Each stands for a consciousness wedded to a custom. The social habits of the people with whom one's life is more immediately bound up must on the whole be followed, and a prejudice in favour of these as compared with habits of any other kind constitutes in large part the mental outlook of every normal man. But if there is to be real sympathy between those who represent very different stages or types of culture, such prejudice must be somehow overcome—to this extent at least, that some sort of line is drawn between essential and non-essential habits, between morals and manners, let us say, so that a large toleration can be exercised in regard to the latter. Here anthropological science can help. The study of man is scientific just so far as it is disinterested and objective. Impartially viewed in the light of the facts, a given mode of life is seen to entail one code of manners and another another. If Nbai, for instance, was to continue to live the life of a Sea Gypsy, his best chance was to stick to Mawken methods of coping with their amphibious environment. Thus who can doubt that the Mawken, confronted with tinned salmon,

were right in protesting, "We do not know to eat it"? Even their practice of cleaning fish into the bottom of the boat, nasty as it may seem to us, and very possibly entailing the drawback of skin disease, may amount to a wise precaution, if, as Mr White suggests, it is vital to naked pearl divers that sharks should not be encouraged to hang about. So much, then, for manners. They must conform to the mode of life. Unless we are prepared to replace this mode of life by another, the manners are best left alone.

But morals can be distinguished from manners. They are far less relative to the mode of life, being concerned with what is largely common to mankind as such. To help Nbai to develop his moral nature, to realise his essential humanity, was not to unfit him for the career of a Sea Gypsy, but rather to brace him for his task. Was he not well advised, for example, to desist from the use of opium? Without pronouncing on the wider issues involved in the opium question, we may surely decide in this particular case that Nbai was likely to be at once healthier and wealthier for his abstinence. Again, it was consistent with the truest sympathy to teach Nbai that black magic ceases to work the moment one ceases to be frightened at it. The curse of primitive society is the fear of the sorcerer. I should indeed like to know in what precise form there was revealed to Nbai his immunity from the magician's spells. Perhaps he merely conceived of Mr White as a superior magician by association with whom he himself had acquired the power to resist. Even were this so, however, something would have been gained. The educator of the savage has to build with such material as is ready to his hand; and it is surely possible to utilise the widespread primitive notion of the spiritual world as a battle-field of rival wonder-waking powers, so as gradually to bring home

the truth that a good will must ever in the long run prove stronger than a bad will.

Finally, to illustrate the difficulty of separating the morally essential from that which is merely contingent on the particular state of culture, I note that Mr White, resolute as he is to suppress all black magic, is disposed to take a lenient view of the white magic of the native leech. Certainly the opprobrious title of devil-doctor is here beside the mark. To practise the faith cure is not to bedevil. Moreover, as Mr White seems to me to be perfectly right in holding, the leech is no conscious charlatan, but thoroughly believes in the power of which he is the vehicle. Only faith can beget faith. It is, however, a nice question whether the educator should be content to leave the medical science of the Mawken in the state in which he finds it. It comes to this, I suppose, that we had better be chary of destroying until there comes the opportunity of substituting something else that will be lastingly better. Meanwhile, in all such matters of doubt, sympathy will suggest the right solution, if the sympathy be reinforced by a solid and sufficient knowledge of the facts.

R. R. Marett.

Oxford.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

UNFORTUNATELY I cannot acknowledge all my helpers by name. Special reference must be made, however, to my old friend the Chinaman, U Shwe I, who enabled me to undertake the study of the Gypsies of the Sea; as well as to Mr E. G. N. Kinch, to whose skill as a photographic artist I owe most of the illustrations. The pangolin was photographed for me by a Chinese photographer, at Maulmein; and the group and a few other subjects were procured from a Burmese photographer at Mergui.

With regard to the mode of presentation, I am greatly indebted to suggestions made by the publishers, and especially to those of their reader.

ORTHOGRAPHY

In the spelling of Mawken words I have followed the Continental pronunciation of the vowels, when used without any diacritical marks.

a is pronounced, whether initially, medially or finally, as *ah*
e " " " " as *aye*
i " " " " as *ee*
o " " " " as *oh*
u " " " " as *oo*

When a *short vowel-sound* is needed, I have imposed the *breve.* So

ă is pronounced, whether initially, medially or finally as in *ăn*
ĕ " " " " as in *pĕn*
ĭ " " " " as in *pĭt*
ŏ " " " " as in *pŏt*
ŭ " " " " as in *pŭtt*

In the Makuchi word, or terminal, which signifies the plural, I have adopted the circumflex over the "e" in order to give it the French vowel-sound required, thus thamê (thamur—silent *r*).

In reading the Mawken name for the northernmost clan and its dialect the word *Dung* must be pronounced as if written *Doo-ng.*

So, the name of the Mawken ship, *kabang*, must be pronounced as if written *kah-bah-ng*; and *micha-blĕn* must be pronounced as if written *mee-chah blenn.*

Burmese words are spelled as officially written in Burma. *Lungyi* is pronounced *loon-jee.*

W. G. W.

THE SEA GYPSIES OF MALAYA

CHAPTER I

AN IMPRESSIONIST SKETCH OF BURMA

LOTUS-LAND! The Silken East! Land of the Peacock! Beautiful Burma! What enchanting pictures are conjured up as our thoughts dally with these epithets! Burma, or, as the people would pronounce it, Bur-*mah*, is indeed a land of charms. The land itself is a beautiful land, and the people from whom the country takes its name are light-hearted, pleasant folk. Those who like to find the West in the East speak of the Burmese as "the Irish of the East."

No well-read nor any travelled person would expect a region so large as Burma to be inhabited by a single race; and Burma is the home of many peoples, of different shades of colour, of diverse religious systems, of varied dress and speaking in tongues unintelligible to each other.

There are the Was. Of them it is told that a Wa maiden would not look at a Wa swain as a prospective spouse unless he had proved his physical superiority

over other men by bringing in their heads or their scalps. For the most part the Wa country is still unadministered by the British.

High upon the hills, bordering upon China and Siam, are the Shans. The Shan men are trousered. There is an ordered government, under British domination; and it is a land of corn and peaches, oranges and bananas. Being five thousand feet above sea-level, and situated in the tropics, the climate is salubrious and exhilarating.

Upon the "backbones" of Burma live the Karens, the Po and the Skaw Karens, in whom some would trace a descent from Abraham, the Chaldean. It would not be unreasonable to suppose that they migrated down the Irawadi and the Salween. During my sojourn in Burma someone informed me that the Salween rises in Thibet, and flows down behind the "Snow's-abode" (Him-alaya). The maps of the Royal Geographical Society know nothing of this, though I confess to having believed my informant, and it may pass, with the rest, as Legend. The Karens are, at the back of things, as were the Hebrews, monolatrists, if not monotheists, and their name for the Supreme Being is Jehowah. Their romantic tradition is fairly well known: how, for many generations, they have been looking for white teachers from over the seas, who would come to teach them the truth about Jehowah, and restore to them the sacred writings they had lost! No one can have read the life story of Dr and Mrs Judson, the American Baptist missionaries,

pioneers amongst the Karens and the Burmese, without being thrilled. Like the Shans and the Burmese, the Karens have a script of their own. The Karens build their villages round the tops of conical hills, where possible. The backs of their dwellings rest upon piles, with the façades encircling the hill-top.

In the coastal lands of the west of Burma are the Arakanese, the men of which race wear neither skirt nor trousers, and do their hair in a ball at the top, and as a fan behind, and wear laps or loin-cloth.

Of the Chins and Kachins, other peoples of whom the men are trousered, there is no need to tell, nor can the remaining races be described here.

En passant, references should be made to the Burmese, who live, for the most part, in the plains, watered by the great Irawadi river and its delta. The Burmese kings had their capitals at different places, one of which was Ava; and it is said that a Burmese king at Ava sent for some of the Sea Gypsies, had them taught to read and write Burmese, and sent them back to their people; but no apparent results have accrued from this incident. Until the British took over their country and exiled their king, the last capital of the Burmese kings was Mandalay. Maulmein, in the Tenasserim division, was the capital of British Lower Burma, and from the old Maulmein pagoda, on the road to Mandalay (in the distant north) one looks westward to the sea, and eastward to the Shan States and China.

The Burmese had the idea, and perhaps some have

it still, that the world is plate-like. It is said that Mandalay was regarded as the middle of the disc, and that the king, when holding Court, seated beneath his sunshade of white silk, was in the middle of the world and in the centre of the universe. Like many kings of yore, he seems to have had a very exalted opinion of himself, of his dignity and of his power, if we may judge from the grandiloquent language of his letter to the British when the invasion of Upper Burma was threatened. Was not the king, in his royal person, to lead his valiant troops and to sweep the British into the sea? It is not many years since, that the story was going the round in Burma that some of the monks instructed the boys in their schools to reply, if questioned by a Government Inspector, that the world is round, like a ball ("lest the European should be angry"); but, "of course, you know that it is flat."

These things are not mentioned with sneer or scoff. Early Christians and a pope laid great store upon such an outlook on the world, and these early Christians, or some of them, were puzzled to know how, if the world were a globe, their theory of salvation could embrace inhabitants at their antipodes. Are not our common terms "sunrise" and "sunset" relics of this past, when apparent truth was not differentiated from reality?

The Burmese are a delightful and cultured race. Their technology is that of a people advanced in civilisation. And their so-called "religious" system

is based upon deep thought, as anyone who has studied Buddhism knows. The teak, ivory and silver carvings of the Burmese bear witness to developed art. I have some beautiful specimens in my possession. Their use of gold-leaf, vermilion and glass-mosaic speaks of a beauty sense, even though the ultimate source of all beauty, as of all truth, be not recognised.

In my many lectures on Burma, in various parts of England and Wales, although I have tried to be lucid, I have found, over and over again, that when I have given an account of the Sea Gypsies, there have been some people who, because they are a people of Burma, have confused them with the Burmese. Though it may be a pardonable mistake, it does great injustice to Burma and the Burmese.

Burma has been written up so well by Shwe Yoe and others; it has been "painted and illustrated" by Talbot Kelly, and photographed and painted by Mrs Muriel, in so exquisite a manner; and Fielding Hall, in *Soul of a People*, has done such justice to the good that is in the Burmese (for Buddhist and Burman are almost synonymous), that there is no need for me to do more than provide pegs upon which readers can hang their recollections. These pegs are necessary, in order that a proper comparison and contrast may be drawn between the people of Burma to-day and those about whom it is intended to deal specifically in the succeeding chapters of this book. There are still people who think that there is a British Burma

and a Burma ruled by a king of Burma. A geographical text-book for schools made this mistake only a few years ago. And voyagers to the Silken East, going to work in Burma, are still requested—as was I!—to remember friends kindly to Mr Smith or Mrs Jones, if encountered, for (may I so put it?) they live just across the way in a tiny village called Bombay!

Observant travellers, as they visit different lands, may notice that each country has "prevailing tints." Often these tints are due to atmospheric conditions, which cause a particular prismatical resolution of the colours of light. They are affected also by the prevailing tone of the soil, and, at certain seasons of the year, by the common flora. Burma's dominating tint is red. It is seen in the soft rose of sunset and sunrise, in the deep reds of sky and cloud effects, and in the mauves and purples of the hills. *Bougainvillæa*, *Flamboyant* and *Lagerstræmia*, with the most graceful of all flowering trees, *Amherstia Nobilis*, combine, with the widely prevailing laterite soil, to produce these tints. And, as if they would be in harmony with the soil of their land, the Burmese men and boys have a predilection for reds in the silks they select for their *lungyis*. The Burmese are not a trousered race. The men and the boys wear a convenient skirt-like nether garment, full, and dressed in graceful folds in front, which can be tucked up and tucked in for swimming, games or work.

For the sake of an interesting comparison, it may be

mentioned that the prevailing tints of British Guiana, to flit from East to West, are blues and delicate blue-greys, as one compares landscape with landscape, in panoramic view; although Guiana too has its red flowers and its laterite soil in places. In Guiana there are diamond mines, and sapphires are found.

Burma teak and rubies, and Rangoon oil and rice remind us of our close connection with this beautiful country; and it may be on this account that we are easily induced to explore its byways and its islands, and try to delve into its distant past; for I have no doubt that the past of Burma, if it could be told, would have many things to relate of a people very different from the Burmese, living a life of another sort. The facts I have collected will but hint at this past, and we shall, when we have considered them, be left uncertain and wondering still.

Is it right to speak of Burma at all and to omit all reference to Rangoon? Perhaps I am a faddist, but I do confess to a strong desire that the present capital of Burma should be allowed its original name. *Yan-gon*, "the war's end," sums up a bit of history and crystallises its poem. *Ran-goon* means nothing at all, and does but perpetuate the unpleasing fact that we British have been guilty of a "superior carelessness" of other languages and the symbolism of words, in an illogical deduction from the poet's dictum that "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

Rangoon is not in the dry zone of Mandalay, nor in

the wet zone of Maulmein and Mergui. Like many other tropical cities, it is a microcosm. Typically Burmese it is not. Europeans, Chinese and Indians from across the Bay (the Bay out here is the Bay of Bengal, not the Bay of Biscay) have left their mark upon it. Electric trams and electric light; motor cars; a large and magnificently equipped hospital; churches and cathedrals, which bear sad witness to the obstinate perpetuation of divisions amongst those who claim to proclaim to the world "the Brotherhood of Man"; and the inevitable picture palace, caricaturing and thereby misrepresenting Western life—these all tell their own tale.

The cantonments, where the Europeans congregate, include the palatial residence of the head of the Government of Burma. It is a luxurious building, which, however, scarcely gives proof of our high regard for æsthetics. It is a palace, with spacious ballroom, a lift and electric fans. Its lawns are from time to time gay with the gorgeous robes of Eastern races, when on them are collected the various peoples who have made Burma their home.

There is still one thing we must mention. *Amherstia Nobilis* was discovered on the banks of the Salween, and named after Lady Amherst, when Lord Amherst was Governor-General of India, with Burma. Yet it is the *padouk*, a flowering tree, about which there are legends, and it is the mantle of orange blossoms, thrice donned, which forecasts the advent of the south-west

monsoon; and it is the golden carpet laid down on village roads which, in contrast to reds, mauves and purples, moves visitors to comment.

To quote from a letter to *The Rangoon Gazette* with reference to the *Amherstia*:

"The tree was discovered by Dr Wallich, on the Salween, near Trockla. . . . There can be no doubt that the tree when in full foliage and blossom is the most strikingly superb object which can possibly be imagined. It is unequalled in the flora of the East and, I presume, not surpassed in magnificence in any part of the world."

There is something in a flower when, as in the case of *Amherstia*, it inspires a person to write a poem about it!

CHAPTER II

THE TENASSERIM & THE MERGUI ARCHIPELAGO

THE southernmost division of the province of Burma is the Tenasserim, which takes its name from a former capital, on the banks of a river of the same name.

Maulmein, the capital to-day, was formerly the capital of British Lower Burma, when Mindon Min and Thibaw, in turn, ruled in Mandalay. Tavoy is a river-port lying farther south, and Mergui, ninety miles nearer the Equator, is the seaport which gives its name to the archipelago.

Mandalay, in the dry zone, has an annual rainfall of from twenty-five to thirty inches; Rangoon registers about seventy-five, and the Tenasserim, including the strip from Maulmein to Mergui and on to Victoria Point, ranges from a hundred and eighty to two hundred and twenty inches a year.

Tales are told of Government officials who apply for leave upon hearing that they are posted to the Tenasserim; and an amusing story is told of one who appealed, "For heaven's sake, don't send me to ——," who was met with the rejoinder, "I have just received a telegram from that place, which reads, 'For heaven's sake, don't send —— here.'"

The climate is neither trying nor objectionable. True it is that glued articles become unstuck and one's shoes will grow fungus if not frequently wiped, when not in daily use. True also that upon occasion it will pour for twelve hours right off, giving a fall of five or six inches within twenty-four hours. But this is no more trying than the cold, damp, dark days of England, and nothing like so uncomfortable. Most afternoons are clear, the water drains away and evaporates rapidly, and the football tournaments are arranged for this season.

The Tenasserim is of especial interest in our present study, as it marks the merging of Burma with Malaya. We regard Malaya as including the westward thrust of Siam, because the general characteristics of the country are identical.

The marked differences are noticeable below Mergui. The tiny port of Bokpyin locates the line of change. Burma is the home of the peacock, which is found, chiefly, in the upper part of the country, especially where primeval forest has been cleared and the secondary growth includes bamboo jungles. Malaya is the habitat of the Argus pheasant, of refined beauty, though without gaudiness of plumage. A more important difference is in the *flora*. Teak gives place to kyanan (pronounced channan), of which there are the red and the white varieties. In public buildings kyanan is used in place of teak, though it is not a substitute of equal quality.

The fisherman cat is found here. We kept one for a time, and studied its methods of plunging into the large tray of water and securing the live fish at a single pounce, with both fore-paws, putting its head under water and bringing it out in its mouth. This cat was kept in a large, enclosed part of the verandah. It cannot be said that it was ever tamed.

A still more interesting creature, found in the lower Tenasserim, is the pangolin, or scaly ant-eater, of which a mother and young were brought to us. I endeavoured to secure them for the Rangoon Zoological Gardens, and failed. The finder, a *kala*, was sure that if he killed them the heads, tails and some other parts would be of inestimable value as charms. So far as record goes, the pangolin is to be found only in the Malay Peninsula (the south-eastern promontory of Asia) and in the regions to the north of Cape Colony. This peculiar distribution is a matter for conjecture, and no solution to the riddle has been found.

Oceanography teaches us that on the floor of the Indian Ocean, running from the Malay Peninsula in a south-westerly direction towards Zanzibar, is a ridge, of which the Seychelles are the mountain-tops. Between Madagascar and the mainland exists one of the deepest parts of the oceans of the world. The theory of a previous continent, now submerged, does not find favour, and we cannot offer a solution here. The prevailing winds are the south-west, bringing up the rain, and the north-east, when the Malay Peninsula has its fine

weather. Ancient voyagers would travel by the wind-routes, and the pangolin may have been transported in one direction or the other by man. Perhaps it is foolish to claim this as the solution.

We go on to consider the most important difference of all. Below Mergui the Burmese races are replaced by the Siamese and the Malay. The lower portion of the Tenasserim shows, by the nomenclature of its villages and settlements, that the Malay language has superseded the Burmese. We have our *Chek Chin* and our *Paul-a-tum-tum*. We have a trousered manhood again. And we have the Moslem faith.

As the influences of Islam upon the Mawken are by no means negligible, owing to intermarriage, I hope that an expression of opinion on this question is allowable. I would endorse the statement made in that splendid book for boys, entitled *Men of Might*, in which Mohammed finds a place with Socrates, Savonarola, Fénelon and Livingstone:

"Nowadays, of course, we do not necessarily regard the founder of a religion different from our own as a wilful impostor, much less as one inspired by Satan. . . . We may well see in him at first an honest seeker. . . ."

And as we look to the future possibility of these islands being developed by a professedly Christian Government, we would hope for a policy which gives effect to the principle embodied in resolutions at missionary conferences held in Egypt, to the effect that the missionary societies should immediately "withdraw

all controversial literature which in the end proves to have a militating effect on the Mohammedans, literature which is unnecessarily offensive if on the attack, or bad-tempered if on the defensive."

The crusades must be viewed in a clearer light!

I made friends with some splendid Mohammedans in Burma, one of whom was a member of the Provincial Council; and I feel that they would not resent the comparison between the Buddha's total prohibition of life-taking, even of fishes, birds and animals, and the Prophet's definite commands to slay the stubborn unbeliever.

The influences being slowly brought to bear upon the Mawken are curiously divergent. And they are oblivious to the opposing character of ideas which those of the north and those of the south are assimilating. The process is an unconscious one.

Perhaps it should be mentioned that Siam, which, as a glance at the map will show, pushes out between the Tenasserim and Malaya proper, is a Buddhist country. The Malays, not the Siamese, have worked up into Lower Burma, being given to roving the seas, and a few Malays have scattered themselves about the Mergui Archipelago. Here and there on the islands may be found Malay villages. The sons of the True Prophet, like the descendants of Jacob, have the business instinct. They do not renounce the good things of this world.

The Mergui Archipelago may be visited by taking

a coasting steamer from Rangoon to Mergui, or by travelling downwards, or upwards, in the Maulmein-Pinang steamer. Both are "B.I." boats.

Travelling is not pleasant during the south-west monsoon, from mid-May to September, as the winds are high and the seas rough. Sometimes a cyclone travels up the coast, and experiences may be fraught with danger as well as with unpleasantness. The trip can be made from Rangoon, or from Maulmein, in from forty-eight to seventy-two hours, allowing for the break at Tavoy, when the river launch exchanges passengers and cargoes with the coasting steamer, and the state of the tides at the mouth of the Tavoy river and at Mergui. The first part of the second decade of this century witnessed a great change on these runs. Previously during the south-west monsoon I was frequently the only saloon passenger. Then the rubber boom, causing numerous rubber plantations to be made, and the finding of some of the richest veins of wolfram known to the world, brought planters, miners and engineers from Ceylon, Australia and Britain to seek wealth in these industries. Saloon passengers became common fare, or common fares, and the European population of Tavoy, Mergui and the Victoria Point district was increased.

When in 1914 the war broke out, the wolfram mines of Tavoy were closed down, for although we owned some of the richest mines in the world, we did not know how to extract tungstic acid from the

wolfram ore, which had to be shipped to Germany ere we could obtain the means wherewith to harden our steel! *The Times* afterwards published a very interesting account of the situation.

Many were the people taken in by the rubber boom; for plantations were set going by companies over-capitalised (making it out of the question for them ever to pay any but the vendors and the working staff and directors); and some lands were taken up which could yield no adequate return; while other less savoury things took place. It is difficult for even well-informed investors, who understand the ratios of production to capital, to judge if a certain acreage can carry such a planting as will yield sufficient latex, which, when sold, will pay working expenses and allow a margin of interest on shares. The rainfall of the lower part of the Tenasserim is not only heavy (as in the upper part), but extends over a greater number of days in the course of the year. It is known that the flow of latex depends upon the moisture, and, given the right soil, the general possibilities for rubber plantations are promising.

The coast-land is undulating, or else hilly, until the neighbourhood of Mergui is reached; the hills are forest-clad; and the country is unsettled and undeveloped. Although there is a sameness in the contours of the landscape, and although during the dark nights rain-clouds and rain itself impair visibility, Captain Lima of the famous *Pachumba* could

tell his whereabouts by sniffing the air. When the weather was too dirty he would adopt the course so vividly described in his own words: "I just flops me 'ook and waits for day."

At the mouth of the Tavoy river, off Reef Island, where the break in the voyage is made for purposes already stated, one has watched the turtles swimming on the surface of the sea and observed the sea-serpents wriggling just beneath it. At Maungmagan, on the coast of the peninsula formed by the river estuary, I have found such sea-serpents "at home" amongst the rocks. Those seen were coiled in the spaces between superimposed boulders, and I should estimate their length, when extended, as being from five to eight feet.

In my diary for January 1909 I have the following entry:—

"Had *chota hazri* on board the *Envoy* (the river launch) while waiting for the *Hindu* (the coasting steamer), then watched the men fishing with nets. On the average, every two out of three hauls included snakes. They were marked with sage-green and green-grey bands, crossing diagonally. The length of these creatures was just under three feet. They appeared to be brought up the estuary by the tide."

The entry goes on to mention that on boarding the *Hindu* it was found that no cabin accommodation was available, so the Inspector of Schools, a Public Works official and myself slept on deck, and used a bath-room as a dressing-room.

At Mergui the coast is flat, and sand and mud banks render the approach to the harbour a matter for caution. The station itself extends along the foot of a low hill, upon the summit of which are situated the Government buildings, the inevitable pagoda and the *choung* (Buddhist monastery).

It is usual for the Government to provide at such stations a circuit house, where the judge on circuit holds the court. There is sleeping accommodation as well as the court-room. Other officials may put up here, and non-officials may make use of the building when it is not in demand by officials, at a charge of two rupees a day. Half of this is to cover the cost of oil, firing and water-fetching; the other half goes towards paying the durwan, or caretaker. This circuit house commands an extensive view across the harbour, and over the opposite island, Palaw, to the low mountains of King's Island.

Formerly Mergui was in the possession of Siam. A pleasant walk inland will bring one to the talipot palms and to a Siamese pagoda, differing in architecture from the Burmese edifices, near to which is a shrine containing a black Buddha. I recollect that elsewhere—I have forgotten the name of the place—the Christ is represented in a similar way. The talipot palm is said to come to maturity in twenty-five years, when it is crowned with ropes of flowers. These bear fruit, the entire crown falls off, scattering the seed, and the crownless bole of the tree is left like a forlorn sentinel.

The houses of Mergui, with but few exceptions, are made of wood, and most of them are thatched with palm leaves. They are crowded together, and afford good fuel for fire. In readiness for such calamities, one may see, within or without some of the larger houses, a large trunk on wheels. Into this the householders toss their valuables and trundle them off to a place of safety when a conflagration occurs. I have seen this done when the fire was almost a hundred yards away.

Above these houses many coco-nut palms soar, giving to Mergui almost the appearance of a coco-nut grove. Palms are characteristic features of tropical landscapes, and there is something bewitching in their graceful form in the moonlight. The houses on the foreshore back on the harbour, and their kitchens and storerooms are propped upon piles which, when the tide ebbs and the mud is exposed, attract particular attention. At a distance the array of stilts borders on the picturesque, and at closer quarters there is an appeal to one's sense of smell. The white pagoda topping the hill, and standing in marked contrast to the brown of the earth-oiled houses and their weather-browned thatch, carries a beautifully worked *hti*, which is hung with wind-bells. This *hti* is a finial somewhat after the form of the ribs of an opened umbrella, the ribs extending down to a circular band of metal from which the bells depend. These tinkle merrily in a breeze and make galloping music in a hurricane. There is

nothing of remarkable beauty in any part of the scene if one surveys it from the deck of a steamer at anchor in the harbour; yet, notwithstanding this, the *tout ensemble* is strikingly picturesque.

Long before the Crown Rubber Estates enhanced the notoriety of this southern port Mergui was renowned for its pearl fisheries. Some people would have it that the name "Mergui" means "pearl." There is not, to my knowledge, satisfactory evidence for this derivation. The Burmese call the place *Baik*, and the Sea Gypsies refer to it as *M'lit*.

When the tide is flowing the harbour is a sheet of blue water, but when the tide ebbs the muddy outflowings of the Tenasserim river foul the bay. An inspection of the muddy foreshore will bring to notice numbers of a species of mud-fish, propelling themselves by means of their pectoral fins, which serve as hands and arms. It is amusing to loiter awhile and to watch these creatures as they slither over the slime. When they come to a small puddle, how they dart into it and roll over, first on one side, then on the other, in evident enjoyment of a dip!

Mud-fish, crabs and other things found at ebb-tide come welcome to the pot, for such is the pot of the Sea Gypsies, and these people may be seen wading to their knees in slime collecting this food.

The silting of mud and sand has formed extensive flats, which lock in the harbour and extend far down the coast to and beyond Bokpyin; there is a tortuous

channel from the north. Upon these banks the Burmese plant their large and ingenious fish-traps. Should any readers wish to know how Buddhist Burmans can engage in fishing, which entails the death of the fish, I would refer them to the Burmans themselves.

Sometimes the harbour contains an interesting collection of craft. There are the *sampans*, with their curved, neck-like prows and their broad sterns. They afford exciting passages from the coasting steamer to the jetty when big waves are running or choppy seas prevail. A few Chinese junks, perhaps, are at anchor. These are gaily painted in the fore part with squares, framing staring "eyes." These eyes enable it to see its way across the waters! I have been told that the average Chinaman dislikes voyaging in craft which lack these painted eyes. John is fast losing his conservatism, and it was surprising to see with what alacrity his queue was dispensed with when the republic was proclaimed, in 1912, and the Manchu dynasty gracefully bowed itself out to the will of the people. It was in the previous year that the Chinese catechist at Maulmein was bold enough to remove his "pigtail" and appear with close-cropped hair, because he had read that "It is a shame for a man to have long hair"! He finds himself in the fashion to-day, though the fashion has a different origin and a different significance. At anchor, too, may be seen the white-painted launches for official

use, or the property of rubber and other companies. Upon appointed days one or two coasting steamers ride the bay, their black funnels bearing two white garters, the insignia of the British India Steam Navigation Company. Pearling-boats also may be seen tied up to the jetties; and Burmese "country boats," with their rounded, thatched roofs at the waist, and their exalted poops, where the steersman stands, or sits, and manipulates the huge paddle, lie about in various directions. Here too may be a few of the strange "ships" which are the home of the sea-drowned folk, the Sea Gypsies.

In rough outline we have, now, a picture of the conditions prevailing in the Tenasserim. We can compare and contrast the Burman and the Malay, the Buddhist and the Moslem. We can envision the forest-covered main. And we can make guesses at the future, and the influences which are at work in the archipelago which lies off this tail of Burma.

CHAPTER III

THE SEA GYPSIES & THEIR HOMES

AS chaplain of the Tenasserim it was incumbent upon me to pay quarterly visits to the southern ports, and it was upon the occasion of the first of my visits that my intercourse with the Sea Gypsies began.

I was standing on the Government steamer jetty at Mergui watching a white-headed fish-eagle seeking its food in the bay. The bird would mount and curve and plane in graceful flight, then with a sudden swoop it would strike the surface, raising a splash, and, soaring swiftly, bear away a fish in its talons. Often have I seen this. As William Long, the American writer, has explained in his enchanting book, *School of the Woods*, such a feat is the result of the careful and persistent training of the young by the parent birds, and, like many other accomplishments of wild life, is not the outcome of an inherited instinct.

While watching the fish-eagle my attention was distracted by the strange movements of a small craft which lay very low upon the surface of the water. This little boat would move forward, then come almost to a standstill; bear to port and then to starboard; then again almost cease to move. Its course was peculiarly erratic, and as it was a small boat and

appeared to be of shallow draught, there was no apparent reason for such a manner of progress. It took a full quarter of an hour to arrive at the jetty upon which I was standing, for which it happened to be making. When, eventually, it came alongside the riddle was solved. The boat was being propelled by four small boys, each of whom used a roughly fashioned oar. Each of these boys pulled when he would, and each eased off when it suited his fancy or his tired muscles. There was not the slightest attempt to pull in stroke. No one was taking the trouble to steer, and the flight of time was not, apparently, of the slightest importance.

In considering the Sea Gypsies and other such people it is necessary to recollect that each family has to build its own house (or house-boat), to collect its own raw materials, and to provide all the finished articles it requires for daily use and livelihood. There are no shops, and factories are unknown. We have others to build our ships and our houses. Others provide our food, which we buy. Furniture is made by others for our use. Civilisation means specialisation and corporate interdependence. Few of us are proficient with our hands; and those of us who learn to use them tend to specialise, and to confine ourselves to one or to a few handicrafts. The technology of the individual amongst civilised peoples is strictly limited. Amongst us only the minority knows what it is to be physically tired out at the close of each day.

THE FLOATING HOME OF THE SEA GYPSIES.

Showing the only shelter, of leaves, which these hard-living people possess; also the bamboo strake running from bows to stern which is built up to provide more free-board.

In estimates of the Gypsies of the Sea, as of other uncivilised peoples, unless we make conscious effort, our estimation of work and our judgment of character will, for these reasons, be far from the straight.

So, with these recollections, we refrain from allowing an initial prejudice with regard to the occupants of the boat which had taken such a strange course.

The boat which had arrived appeared to be about twenty-five feet in length. The tree trunk from which its hull was fashioned had been deeply scooped at prow and at stern, giving the appearance of scalloped ends. It was strikingly different from the ships and boats to which one had been accustomed, which are built with as fine a fore part as possible, to cut the water as it progresses. The hull of this boat, as examination showed, was curved so as to rise fore and aft. The segment between the bows and stern was built up with the stems of a palm, called in the Burmese *yingan*. The Sea Gypsies call it *kamaw*. These stems were laid one upon the other, horizontally, in the segment, on each side of the hollowed keel, and formed the bulwarks. The "joints" were caulked with a resinous matter collected from the trees of the jungle. These sides were kept in position by stays, made of natural crooks, to which the palm stems were lashed. The making of planks for the sides would have been difficult, if not impossible, for the average Sea Gypsy, who lacks saws and planes; and although the palm stems made the boat more frail, they made it more

buoyant and much lighter to haul than planks would have done. Athwart the boat, at irregular intervals, rough bars of wood were fixed, and upon these split bamboos were placed, longitudinally, and lashed to them, thus forming decks. The lashings were of the inner bark of certain trees. These decks covered the boat, almost without break, from bows to stern. Amidships, on one side, was left a baling-hole.

The scallop, fore and aft, in the keel-piece of the boat serves for front-steps and back-steps to the house. Occasionally the Sea Gypsies keep dogs, and it was a dog which first drew my attention to the meaning of the scallop. I was standing on the shore one day looking at some of these boats drawn up out of the water when a dog came along. It did not attempt to jump over the side, but went to the bows and stepped up in correct style. Frequently after this I noticed that the people themselves usually entered their home in this way; and a careful inspection of the boat's sides made it plain to me that were they to clamber over the built-up palm stems, such a strain would in a short time render the boat unseaworthy, and even break down the sides. The step at the stern is especially useful for re-entering the boat after launching from the beach.

It is not uncommon to find an aperture left in the bows and at the stern, which allows the small boys and girls to drop through the deck and crawl from one end of the boat to the other without disturbing deck

passengers or cargoes. Personally I should not care to make use of this alley-way, for reasons more than one.

Amidships there is a roughly hewn plank, cut out of a tree by axe. This has a hole, burnt out or chopped out, to allow a mast to be slipped through. There is also a socket in the bottom of the boat to receive the end of the mast. For when winds are favourable the oars are abandoned and a sail is hoisted. The mast is a pole with a fork at the top. Over this a rope, made of plaited grass, is slipped, and one end is tied to the top spar of the sail. The hoisting of the sail is a simple affair, and it is kept up by fastening the other end of the rope to one of the boat's crooks, or to a deck spar. The sail is made of palm-leaf, and it is rolled up like a Japanese mat and placed on deck, or on the house-top, when not in use. This sail is made in four sections very often. A rectangular piece of palm-leafing is made by threading together leaves cut to shape. This shaped piece is then securely fastened to the top spar, which is a piece of flat wood. At the bottom of this section is fashioned a spline of bamboo, and on to this spline is fixed the next rectangular section of the sail. Another bamboo spline is fitted to the bottom of this, and another section. At the bottom of all is another spar, which serves as a boom. The splines are, of course, of split, not of round, bamboo. By making the sail in such sections it is quite easy, should rough winds tear it in any part, to

cut out the damaged section and to join up the remaining good sections and make a sound, though shortened, sail. I experienced the necessity for this procedure, as I shall relate.

Sometimes the mast is an ordinary pole, to the top of which a loop is lashed—the loop being made of plaited grass—through which the halyard passes. Not infrequently the loose end of the halyard is made fast aft. A strengthening cord, also of grass, is passed down the middle of the sail and made secure to each sectional spline. This cord assists in keeping the sections of the sail together. The whole thing gives evidence of much ingenuity, and an imaginative person can easily trace the stages by which it has been attained. The top spar of the sail is held by a sling fastened at each end of the spar, so as to prevent either end from dipping. The middle strengthening cord passes up beyond the spar and meets this sling-rope. When the sail is being hoisted the strain is taken in three places—namely, at each end and in the middle. The masts are often taller than the length of the boat. They are not raked fore nor aft, but, as they are slim and supple, the upper part bends slightly forward in a strong wind. As the greater weight in the boat is always aft, this does not cause the boat to "dive," nor does it affect its safety and that of its occupants.

It is customary to have the hearth, where the home-fires are kept burning, amidships, near to the baling-

hole. To call it a baling-hole is to describe only one part of its use, as will become apparent when I give an account of my voyage to Maiden Isle. Earth is spread on the deck to prevent the deck itself from catching fire, and three large stones, arranged as a tripod, form the fire-place. Here, in an earthen pot, or in an iron one obtained by barter, the morning and evening meals are cooked. The Sea Gypsies have but two regular meals a day, after the manner of Elijah. Unfortunately for them, even these two meals a day are not always forthcoming. When I was taking the census of these people in 1911, at the request of the Government of India, because of my knowledge of the people and their language, many were the sad facts I discovered.

Abaft the hearth is the home. Two hooped supports, of wood, are fixed, and upon these the roof of the "house" is placed. This roof is not thatched, as in the case of the Burmese country boats. It is made of single palm-leaf pieces stitched together with grass, or with light thongs made of the inner bark of some tree. The palm used for the roof is known in Burma as *dunnee*. The ends of the thongs are left unfinished, and they hang down like the uncut threads of an unfinished garment sewn by machine. The roof can, if desired, be removed, and is often taken ashore and set up on the beach to serve as a shelter when the Mawken are camping. It can be rolled up and stowed away should occasion arise.

This is commonly the need when the squalls and storms of the south-west monsoon season prevail. The hoops alone would not suffice as a support for the roof, so there is a ridge-pole as well, and this is fixed to forked supports at each end, the hoops merely preventing the roof from falling in at the sides. There are stays, rising up from the sides of the boat, and these support horizontal, light poles, which act as wall-plates to receive the eaves. The sides of the boat are the walls of the house, and the roof sits down upon them! It is impossible to walk about in these houses, owing to the roof resting at almost deck-level. As this roof is light, most of the Sea Gypsies are careful to place other poles above the eaves, for the purpose of keeping the roof from taking flight whenever the wind may be described as in a frolic.

The oars, when in use, are tied to the gunwale (but these people have no guns of any kind), and this gives the leverage obtained by us in the use of the rowlock. When not required, the oars can be shipped and laid to rest in the stays under the eaves, or placed, as additional weight, on the roof to help to keep it in position when gales are blowing. In some of the boats the usual covering of palm-leaf is superseded by two mats contained in two frames of split bamboo, hinged together, so as to fit it over the ridge-pole and slope downwards on either side. It is a device not often seen by me. Such a roof is, of course, much more durable than the other kind,

and it is well worth the extra time and trouble entailed in its manufacture.

The floor of the house is but the continuation of the deck, which has been already described. Over the split bamboos in this part of the boat are spread mats, soft and durable, which are made by the Sea Gypsies themselves. These mats are their "chairs" by day and their beds by night. Sheets and blankets are not called for, and housewives do not include bed-making in their morning duties.

Sometimes there is a second covering to weigh down the roof, or, occasionally, strips of framed matting are placed at the front gable-end, which catches most of the wind.

The Burmese people on the mainland use mats, which they roll up and put away in the morning. And they have the luxury of a pillow, of small size, upon which to rest the head. These Sea Gypsies do not have pillows of any description. They are accustomed to sleep lying prone upon the back, or with one arm under the head. If the whole family cannot find room beneath the roof, the children will lie about anywhere on the uneven decks. When there is wind and rain the entire family must rouse itself and remain sitting up if it would avoid sleeping in a shower-bath. Many must be the sleepless nights during the wet season. It is evident to anyone who knows what the south-west monsoon is like that these people often have to sleep with the rain beating upon them, with the only alternative of having no sleep at all.

The term for these house-boats is *kabang*, of which the singular and the plural are alike, as in our word sheep. In the word *kabang* both vowels are pronounced openly, as "a" in French (also as in our word "father"). You may speak of one *kabang*, or of a fleet of *kabang*.

Those Westerners who have seen the *kabang*, or have seen photographs of them, will avoid the conclusion that the Sea Gypsies in their *kabang* are like the Chinese in their house-boats. The Chinese live in their boats upon the great rivers of China. The Gypsies live in their *kabang* upon the sea. The boats are different, the people are different and the whole life is different. The only valid comparison is that both live upon water.

Having taken a rather close scrutiny of the house, we may now be somewhat inquisitive about its occupants.

I myself have not taken any scientific measurements of heads and noses. Mr W. J. S. Carrapiett, of the Burma Service, did this, and has recorded these measurements in a thin brochure which he prepared for the Government of Burma. The average person may not be at all interested in classifications by head measurements, as he sees so many shapes of heads amongst those who are classed as English. Yet even this uninterested average person may, upon occasion, be heard to remark upon a "beautiful" head or a "clever" forehead. Since, however, these Sea Gypsies have not yet been placed in a classification which is

MAWKEN MEN.

Well developed specimens in spite of their hard life. The man on the left possesses a beard and moustache, not very common among the younger men of these people. The white on their legs is mud.

secure, there is some interest in trying to form an opinion as to the group to which they should be said to belong.

Dr Deniker, as Mr Carrapiett mentions, adopts the following rules for classifying the "Races of Man"—

(*a*) Dolicho-cephalic, those with index below 77.
(*b*) Sub-dolicho-cephalic, with index between 77 and 79·6.
(*c*) Meso-cephalic, with index between 79·7 and 81·6.
(*a*) Sub-brachy-cephalic, with index between 82 and 85·2.
(*e*) Brachy-cephalic, with index between 85·3 and 86·9.
(*f*) Hyper-brachy-cephalic, with index 87 and above.

Mr Carrapiett states that he took the cephalic and nasal indices of eighty-two Sea Gypsies of the male sex all over the age of twenty-one. These indices range from 72·20 to over 87, or from the Dolicho-cephalic to the Hyper-brachy-cephalic. The average cephalic index is 79·18; and, if classified by Dr Deniker's rules, they would come under the group of Meso-cephals. In this group are included the Chinese, Nicobarese, Achinese, Jakuns, Andamanese and the Arakanese. The Sea Gypsies would come near to the Nicobarese, and it may be noted that the Nicobar Archipelago lies farther out in the Bay of Bengal, to the south-west of the Mergui Archipelago.

It is not intended to suggest that the Sea Gypsies

have worked from west to east, thereby approaching nearer to the mainland of Burma as we know it to-day. On the other hand, it may be observed that the cephalic indices of the Burmese, Cambodians, Siamese and Malays would not lead us to classify the Sea Gypsies with them. We do not assume that they are half-brothers, or cousins, to the Malays, Burmese or Siamese, who occupy the mainland facing this archipelago.

The Sea Gypsies therefore have a peculiar interest for us. They are a race of short people. I have a group photograph, which includes the Chinaman U Shwe I (of whom more later) and Mr Walkem (the splendid Eurasian master, then of the Municipal High School at Mergui, now Head of the Reformatory at Insein), and this photograph enables me to see that the Gypsies are shorter than either U Shwe I or Mr Walkem. The latter's height is five feet six inches. And I should say that the average height of the Sea Gypsies is from five feet four inches to five feet five inches. Most of the women do not attain this height. It is a matter for regret that I did not take actual measurements at the time.

The skin is a rich brown in colour, some of the Sea Gypsies being much lighter than others. The hair is straight and it is usually jet-black. I have seen one girl with frizzy hair (not in small curls like the African's). A few have shown a decided tendency to auburn; and I met with several whose hair had the

appearance of having been blanched, or bleached. The old folk go grey, but I am not, however, in a position to say at what age the Sea Gypsy becomes old.

For the most part the people, men and women alike, are well developed in body and limbs. Generally the men have but little hair on the face, though they do not adopt the custom of some peoples (such as the Makuchis) of pulling out the facial hairs by the roots. Some of the men grow a ragged little beard, which, irreverently, might be likened to a goat's beard. They might be quite handsome if this were either pulled out or dealt with by a West End barber. The chins are "strong," the lips are dull red, often thin, and never very coarse. The foreheads of men and women are "high," and their faces show that they are people of intelligence (though untutored) and capacity. Like all peoples of the warmer climes whom I have met, they have dark brown or brown-black eyes. Noses vary much. In many instances they are inclined to be flat. They plainly exist, however, and the bridges of many are decidedly pronounced. I have not observed a skyward nose nor a hook amongst these people.

Anyone studying this description and allowing free play to the imagination (not to be confused with fancy) should be able to envisage the Sea Gypsies as they are in actual life.

Some of the damsels when they smile show even rows of pearl-white teeth, of which very few of the

men and older women can boast. The growing practice of betel-chewing discolours and grinds down the teeth. This is due to the increasing intercourse with the Burmese.

In the course of this account it will become evident why these people dress in rags and tags, and why they present such an unattractive appearance.

I would not suggest their being Europeanised, though a wash and brush-up and a neat and clean covering of some sort would betray them in a better light.

Some waggish American tourist has called the people of the Andaman Islands—beyond the Nicobar Group—the "Adams and Eves," because of their being clad in their birthday dresses, and, as we leave the Andamanese severely alone, their "super-modern" fashions do not concern us. When we come into daily contact with peoples our conventions exercise a powerful prejudice. Travellers are fully aware of the simple modesty of men and women yet unclad above the waist. And, as in Guiana, we are content with the bead-apron of the women and the loin-cloth of the men (the Indian races of the country). Shall we introduce the Sea Gypsies to bead-aprons and loin-cloths? Or shall we suggest a simple skirt for the women and shorts for the men? I sincerely hope we shall not decide to send them the misshapen and unbecoming garments which we have sometimes inflicted upon other races whom we have gone to teach, as a mark of their advance in life! People who have no national

costume and no full-size mirrors need to be most carefully considered in the matter of dress. There is the question of health, as well as that of beauty. And if we dress them up as guys we deter our fellows from regarding them as members of the family. Where there is a national dress, it would seem to me to be almost impertinence to change it. And I often wonder at our stupidity and lack of nice feeling for the prejudices of the people of India, whose girls we have dressed in white in our mission schools. To the Indian—as the Bishop of Dornakal has pointed out—white is "the absence of colour," and is the dress of the widow. Africans often speak of us as "the colourless people," which is rather better than the Chinaman's first impressions of us (gained from the behaviour of Europeans who landed in China), for he used to refer to us as "red-faced foreign devils." We were supposed to be incarnate demons!

The Sea Gypsies, taking them as a race, regard us and all other peoples with fear. They have suffered at the hands of all.

CHAPTER IV

HOW THE SEA GYPSIES NAME THEMSELVES—& WHY

SO far we have avoided referring to the Sea Gypsy, as we do to an unnamed child, as "it." There is, nevertheless, something in a name, and a great deal in the right name.

As a people we must own up to having been singularly careless about other races and their names. By a change of vowel we lower an Indian race in Guiana from the status of "heavenly men," or "heaven folk," and make of them mere nonentities. That we should deprive ourselves and our descendants of so much history and poetry, crystallised in names, is deplorable. Where there is a written language there is some hope, for archæologists will rise up, alert to catch at any suggestion, to examine the slightest clue, and will excavate the name of a king from a seeming jumble of wedges and open the gates to the realm of a language. In those cases in which the language is unwritten, knowledge may cease to be accessible.

Some interesting notes appear in vol. ix. of the Census of 1891, Imperial Series (vol. xx., xxx. 1. Burma Report), and also in vol. xii. of Census of India, 1901 (Part I. Report by C. C. Lowis), copies of which were kindly placed at my service by Mr J. D.

Fraser, then Deputy Commissioner, Amherst district, in the Tenasserim division.

In the former volume it is stated:

"XX deserves mention, as well as U Shwe I, whose zeal and knowledge of the Selungs has made the enumeration of these people a success. Going out in a small boat through the islands, few boats escaped his eye, and though his expenses were guaranteed, he has refused to accept any remuneration whatever."

U Shwe I is well known to me, and I mean to devote a little chapter to him. Several times has he told me the story of that census-taking, and I doubt if he would care to try to support the claim that the operations were a success! He tells how, in his little boat (one of the boats of the Sea Gypsies), he travelled by night as well as by day, and whenever the European (snuffered under the mystic XX) who was working with U Shwe I "come to an island he find I have been there before he." He goes on to say that he took the names of the Selongs "all through the islands." This is recounted with a grand sweep of the hand.

Later on reference will be made to methods adopted by some of those engaged in the Census of 1901.

Attention is called to these things because they throw some light upon the manner in which knowledge of the "Selongs" has been obtained.

Any visitor to Mergui will hear these Sea Gypsies alluded to as the "Salons."

Selone, Selong, Selung, Silong, Salon — all are spellings of the name by which they are known to the Burmese and Telaings. The Sea Gypsies call the Burmese "T'now" and the Malays "Batuk." But we do not go to the Sea Gypsies for these names. We prefer to call the Burmese by an anglicised form of that which they call themselves. The Sea Gypsies, likewise, have a right to be known by their own name, especially as it is of such significance. For this reason the names which appeared in previous Census reports were abandoned by me in 1911.

In paragraph 202 of the 1891 Report (p. 169) the following statement occurs:—

"The last of the vernaculars of Burma is the Selon or Selung language, as Dr Anderson more accurately calls it."

Unfortunately I have not been able to discover why Selung is more accurate than Selon. "Selon is the Burmese pronunciation of the name." Does this mean to imply that Selung is the pronunciation of their name by the people themselves? It is, in reality, the Sea Gypsies' pronunciation of the Burmese name for themselves—nothing more.

To quote further from the Report, without being tedious, I hope:

"It is now generally admitted that Selung is a distinct Malayan language."

The point to notice about these expressions of opinion is that they are given by men who have not known the

Sea Gypsies intimately. They have but "encountered" them.

When I had acquired a knowledge of their language and was able to converse freely with them, their traditions were handed on to me. And this is how they give account of themselves:

Many generations ago their forefathers lived upon the mainland of Burma-Malaya. They had settlements, with houses and cultivated lands. They were a quiet, peace-loving people. They were happy and contented.

Then came the downward sweep of hordes of warlike men, the T'now (Burmese), burning and plundering. They drove these defenceless people before them. The Batuk (Malays) troubled them from the south also.

Being driven to the coast, they crossed the shallower waters to the islands of the Mergui Archipelago and made several large settlements. One of these was on the large island called Chai-an, which is marked upon our maps as Kissering. It lies to the north-west of Bokpyin, off the low-lying coast, with its mangrove swamps and sand and mud banks. Some of them pushed out from the coast, farther north, where Melit (Mergui) now stands. No village existed there in those far-off days. They made a large settlement upon Dung (Ross Island). They had plantations of coco-nuts, bananas, pine-apples and bread-fruit, with other things as well. Each settlement had its headman, or king, or great man (the last is the best

translation of the term), and the change of life was pleasant.

In those days the little *chapan*, or wood-skin, was used. Sometimes it was more than a wood-skin (shaped skin or bark); it was a dug-out (a boat fashioned from a tree trunk).

Further troubles overwhelmed them. The Batuk raided from the south. Acts of piracy were frequent. Their plantations were robbed and destroyed, and many of the people were carried off to become slaves. It became necessary to build ships so that they might take to the sea and flee from danger. The *kabang* was built and used. During the rough weather of the south-west monsoon there was some respite. In the fine, calm weather they were molested again. At last they decided that, during the fine weather at least, they must live in their ships and get them away at the approach of any other boat. These ships were fitted up as homes, and in them the people lived.

In the forties of the nineteenth century Major Broadfoot, a Deputy Commissioner in Mergui, was cognisant of the acts of piracy of the Malays against these people, and acts of piracy and molestation occurred during the years of my intercourse with them.

Most of them became so used to live aboard ship that they gave up building "houses" on the islands, and they lived—as most of them do live to-day—the roving life of Gypsies of the Sea.

When first they took to their ships, these ships

were made with insufficient freeboard, and during the rough weather many of them were swamped and the occupants were drowned.

Cyclonic conditions prevail annually in the Bay of Bengal, and devastating cyclones sometimes visit the coast, blowing down trees and lifting the roofs from houses.

Upon one occasion when voyaging to Chai-an by launch I counted seven water-spouts in Whale Bay during the course of an hour. During part of that time four water-spouts were working, simultaneously, across the bay. When we realise that these are caused by a small cyclone of air drawing the cloud downward until it meets the sea and churning up the waves of the sea itself, we can appreciate how poor a chance had these little ships in such climatic conditions.

Dwellers in Burma know full well what the dark clouds mean, with the lowering deep black of the storm-head, the vivid flashes of lightning, and the crash and the roar of the thunder. The monsoon has broken! While cooler atmosphere is felt and fine intervals are enjoyed, we expect the recurrence, during the next few months, of violent blasts of wind, shaking houses with their giant blows and bending even the mighty trees.

The lot of the Gypsy on the sea is not an enviable one in these days; and even if his ship be drawn up on shore, and the Gypsy shelters beneath the trees, he lacks the comforts of a settler's life. Unclad and

unable to procure sufficient supplies of food, he must shiver and often know the pangs of hunger.

Learning by their sad experience, the shipbuilders added to the freeboard by building up the layers of palm stems to an additional height of about nine inches, or a full span of the hand. This added piece of freeboard is, up to the present day, marked by a bamboo rib, running from bows to stern, on each side of the boat, where the gunwale formerly was.

The people took to calling this the *maw*, or "drowning," as without it the boats would be speedily swamped in rough weather. In their language *P'maw* means "to drown." *O'en*, in the purest dialect, is their word for fresh water taken from the springs, while *o'en-ken*, abbreviated into *o'ken*, means salt water. The word for "drown" and the word for "salt water" have been coalesced to make the new work *Maw-ken*. This is the name they apply to themselves; and this name, which is their own name for themselves—no former name being in memory—means "The Sea-drowned."

These Gypsies of the Sea are the Sea-drowned-folk; and in the structure of their *kabang* their history is handed down.

Why should we not use their own name for themselves—Mawken—and preserve this crystal?

CHAPTER V

U SHWE I: THE "PAINTER"

IT would be ungracious, as well as being a serious omission, were one to write an account of the Mawken without making reference to such an important and picturesque figure in the picture as U Shwe I, the Chinaman.

As a study in character he is interesting; and his long connection with and influence upon the Mawken cannot with fairness be ignored. Certainly I cannot be indifferent to his many services to me, first in bringing me into touch with them and then in using the influence he had acquired over them to serve my plans.

It is not, of course, as an interesting subject that I drag in an account of U Shwe I here. It is because that at the very outset of my dealings with the Mawken I had to work through this Chinaman; and but for this early introduction to him much of that which follows would not have been written, nor could my first step have been taken, of which I give an account in the next chapter, to secure the good-will of the Mawken.

While this reference to U Shwe I is a break in the tale of the Mawken, this break occurred naturally in the course of events; and between my first encounter

with the Mawken and my subsequent dealings with them I had to make the acquaintance of and get to know this Chinaman.

When I saw that strange little craft moving across the bay in the peculiar manner already described, and when I saw the occupants at closer quarters, a desire to know them at once sprang up. I wanted to find out who they were, what they were and how they lived. Upon giving expression to this desire to Mr Walkem in course of a conversation on the very day of my first seeing them, he told me that there was a Chinaman in the town to whom the Mawken paid frequent visits, and he suggested that I should call upon this Chinaman and solicit his aid. So there and then I decided to act upon the advice, and we went together to his house. We descended the tortuous path leading down from the circuit house, past the pagoda, with its wind bells tinkling merrily in the breeze, and came to the main street, at a point opposite the steamer jetty. Then we followed this street down until we came to a house with a narrow and sheltered balcony running along its front. It was a wooden house, made of *kyanan*, which had become a deep brown colour as the result of frequent smearings of earth-oil. This is the crude oil as it comes down the long pipes from the wells to Rangoon. In those days the cost of earth-oiling worked out at an anna (penny) for ten feet square of surface. The oil assists in keeping out boring creatures and throws off the heavy rains. The roof of the house

was of palm-leaf thatch, in keeping with the other houses in the town. The shelter to the verandah was a lean-to roof, built out just above the top of the doorway. It prevented the sun from blazing directly into the house, the front of which contained shutter-doors, opened by day and allowing full view of the interior to passers-by if they cared to be curious. There was a single room the whole width of the house, and besides the door it had two gaping window-places extending almost to floor-level. There was no glass; only wooden shutters. At the back of this single spacious room was a raised platform, reached by a short flight of steps. This platform had a balustrading along the front. It was the bedroom used by U Shwe I and his wife. The two grown-up sons and the girls slept on mats brought out and spread upon the ground-floor at night. Through the back door (as I learned afterwards) was a staging with outsheds built upon piles. Under this the sea came up when the tide was flowing. All the houses on the foreshore of Mergui had these extensions raised upon piles.

Characteristically as a Chinaman, and true to the precepts inculcated into the race by the great Confucius, U Shwe I received me with unaffected courtesy. He thought not of himself nor of my probable thoughts about him. His attention was directed towards his visitors, and he assumed the attitude of one who was desirous of ministering to any wants they might have.

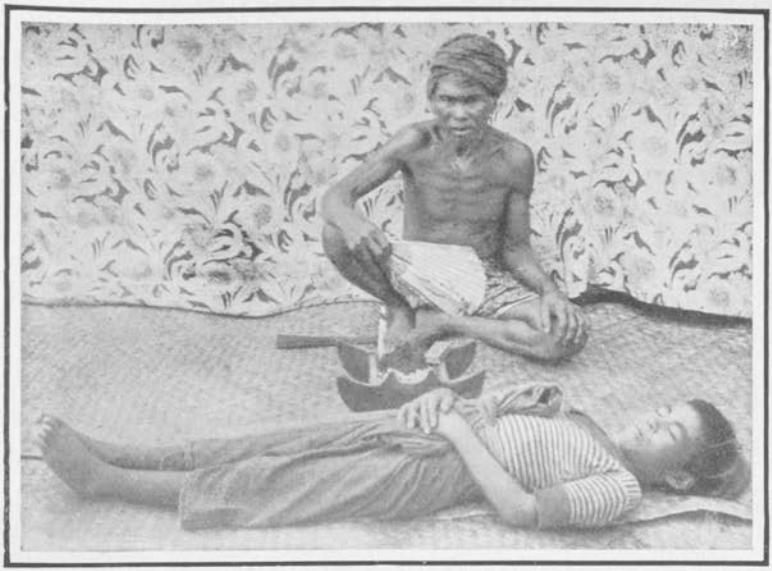
If Henry Drummond is right that "Courtesy is Love

in little things," then the Chinese, of whom I have had years of experience, in Guiana and in Burma, can tell us much of how it can work out in life.

Of course he proffered us chairs, with a bow, a motioning of the hand and a "Please sit down." He remained standing until I asked him to be seated too. We found ourselves in a cool place, the brown, wooden walls of which were restful to the eyes after the glare of the road without.

The first thing I had not failed to observe when U Shwe I came forward to greet us was that he unwound his queue, which had been coiled on the top of his head.

Westerners have been accustomed to associate the Chinese with the queue, which they have, somewhat irreverently, called a pigtail. As a little boy U Shwe I would have had several little tails, until the hair had grown long enough to allow of its being plaited into a single queue. To make it longer, either black silk or combings of the hair of female relatives would be plaited into it. This queue was imposed upon the males of China when the conquering Manchus set up their empire. It was not so much, as has been sometimes represented, a sign of servitude as a symbol of unity. The conquered lost their separate identity and became one, in outward appearance, with their conquerors. And this queue came to be regarded with great respect! Although I had not been cognisant of it in Guiana, I found that in Burma it was customary,



THE SICK AND THE DOCTOR.

A *Micha Blen* and a fever patient. The carved tray holds parched rice, and a wax candle. The " doctor " has in his hand a borrowed fan.

" GRANNIE."

An old grandmother, sitting on the staging at the back of U. Shwe I's house.

amongst the Chinese, to lower the queue (if coiled for work) when in converse with a "superior." And I recollect witnessing an amusing incident in Burma, when an Englishman, who knew of the custom, was talking to a Chinaman who did not regard that particular Englishman as a "superior," and consequently kept his queue coiled on the top of his head. If I may be allowed a bantering statement, I would say that the average Englishman is inclined to regard himself, because he is an Englishman, as the superior of any member of any other race on the face of this earth! Being typical of this average Englishman, the man in question lowered the Chinaman's queue for him! The Chinaman, knowing his man, took the matter well and laughed at the joke of it.

Whenever I visited U Shwe I he would lower his queue, if it were coiled, as he would have done for anyone of a religious order. The removal of my hat upon entering his house was a return of courtesy.

It was during my stay in Burma that the Republic of China came into being, and it was a remarkable testimony to the political significance of the queue when one saw many of the Chinamen appear in the streets "curtailed." U Shwe I, either because he was too old to care, or because he was numbered amongst those who decided to "wait and see," did not remove his queue. It is not unlikely that he retained an idea that it was sacrosanct.

When U Shwe I put out his hand to shake hands I had noticed that he retained another symbolic relic in Chinese custom. This was the elongated nail on the middle finger of the right hand. The nail was allowed to grow to a great length, and it was clear evidence, to all who understood, that the wearer of the nail did not earn his livelihood as a manual labourer. It is not that the Chinese regard manual labour with contempt; it is that they have a high regard for the brain-worker, the clever and the wise man. A boy of humblest birth could rise to be a Mandarin in the old Empire. The lowest on the social scale in China is the soldier, because he devastates and slays. U Shwe I was a striking witness to the truth that there will be no Yellow Peril, so far as the Chinese are concerned, unless Westerners, or the Japanese, succeed in changing the Chinese ideas of spiritual and moral values. The Chinese are a courteous and a peace-loving people.

Like many Easterners, U Shwe I delighted in making me "little presents." As I did not smoke—no, not even Burma cheroots, then obtainable at Maulmein a hundred for a rupee—he was precluded from supplying me with smokes; nor did he find me prepared to "chew betel," in which his Burmese wife delighted. She, although not taking any prominent part in our conversations, was not secluded in a women's quarter, but enjoyed the liberty of the sexual equality common amongst the Burmese in their social relationships. My

"little presents" might be a pine-apple, some bananas, or a mother-of-pearl oyster-shell.

It would be tiring to give an account of each of my many subsequent interviews, and to record, in snippets, his history as, by degrees, this was related. So I shall piece these together.

The father of U Shwe I was a pilot on one of the ships which brought British troops across the bay for the second Burmese war. After the war he settled at Mergui and lived by trading. U Shwe I was born in Burma and he took to himself a wife of the people of the country. He also took to trading. For some years he had the free run of the Archipelago. He made friends of the Mawken, or, rather, of some of them, and he induced them to bring to him pearl oysters and other valuable products to be found in the sea or upon the islands. He would open the oysters and extract the pearls and the blisters, and, according to his own admission, pay the Mawken half-a-bag of rice for a score of pearls. It was not a losing game, for the shells of these oysters, being mother-of-pearl, are in themselves valuable, and in the rough will fetch several shillings a pair. When scraped and polished they assume a much greater value. Upon the rough scales being removed from the exterior, the shells are of exquisite beauty, and the insides are iridescent with the colours of the rainbow. Some of these oysters are fourteen inches wide and eleven inches transversely. One in my possession, which has been scaled—thereby

being reduced in size—measures ten inches by eight and a half.

In those days the British Government knew nothing of the pearl fisheries of the Mergui Archipelago, and U Shwe I had the grounds to himself, and took advantage of his opportunity.

His dealings with the Mawken raise the important question of the *mores* of business; and although there are important deductions to be made by comparisons, which I must admit I itch to set out, yet they are questions which should find place in a treatise upon Moral Philosophy and as such may be out of place here.

U Shwe I probably is a mixture, or combination, of Taoist, Confucian and Buddhist.

As a Taoist he seeks to fulfil the precept of Lao-tsze:

"Recompense injury with kindness."

As a Taoist he understands the teaching:

"He who knows others is wise. He who knows himself is enlightened. He who overcomes others is strong. He who overcomes himself is mighty. He who knows when he has enough is rich. He whose memory perishes not when he dies, lives for ever. The sage dwells in the world with a timid reserve; but his mind blends in sympathy with all."

As a Confucian he knew the laws of courtesy; but he is not a follower of the Confucian dictum:

"While you do not know about life, how can you know death? Treat all supernatural beings with respect, but keep aloof from them."

As a Buddhist he believes in the benefit of doing good. He seeks to gain merit, or to grow in goodness, thereby destroying evil in himself by a process of exclusion. This explains why he refused to take payment for the Census work in which he took part in 1891, as mentioned in the Report.

Those Mawken who venture to Mergui come to him for food when bad weather prevails and they are starving. It is difficult for those who have never experienced starvation themselves to know all that it means to be starving. From May to September some Mawken may be seen almost daily at the house of the Chinaman, sheltering under his verandah and being fed. They are ill-clad, just rags, and desolate. Though he still trades in a small way, he does not differentiate between those who can make a return and those who cannot. His gentleness in speech and manner towards the Mawken is very touching.

U Shwe I must, of course, be classed as a *Paramat* Buddhist, or heretic Buddhist, as, with a general acceptance of the Buddha's teaching, he holds firmly the belief in a Supreme Being, whose "Peace" can be penetrated by prayer. He makes offerings to the monks and contributes gold-leaf for the adornment of the pagodas and the images of the Buddha, and rises long before dawn and spends hours in prayer and meditation. His great desire, he told me, was to build a pagoda. This would crown all his works of merit.

Those who know Burma should have heard the

romance of that other Paramat Buddhist, of the Irawadi delta district, who goes down to posterity as "the Christian Hermit," his work amongst the Telaing Karens being a powerful agency in producing the mass movement towards Christianity of these Buddhists of the delta.

The desire to build a pagoda seemed to be unlikely of fulfilment. In 1912 U Shwe I showed me a large bottle almost full of pearls. There must have been several score! Amongst them was a so-called black pearl, which, like the white elephant, did not answer to its name. It would be more correct to speak of a light elephant and a dark pearl. The latter is pale brown. The wealth in this bottle could not be realised, as he explained to me, for "I am too old to go to Holland to sell them." (Why Holland, I did not inquire.)

"Why not send them by post?"

"Because they might be stolen, or they might be kept and the money not sent to me."

"Then why not send them by your elder son?"

"Because he might, when he got there, want to travel about, and would use up all the money."

Occasionally he finds a purchaser for a single pearl. It is not likely that he will die of penury.

Towards the latter part of the last century some bright officials conceived the idea of holding an Exhibition of Economic Products of the district. At this Exhibition U Shwe I exhibited, with pride, some of

his pearls and mother-of-pearl shells. The eyes of Officialdom were opened to the possibilities of the Archipelago, and regulations were made as to the fisheries. These included penalties, which we usually specify, since, in our law-making, we generally assume that regulations are made in order that they may be evaded! There is, now, a licence to be obtained and paid for in connection with each diving-pump used.

The new state of affairs affects not only the Chinaman; it has resulted in developments which have made it harder for the Mawken to make a living.

For various "Services rendered to Government" U Shwe I was awarded, at a Durbar held in Mergui, the A.T.M. He would have some greater reason for being numbered amongst those "whose memory perishes not," and upon several occasions he asked me to use my supposed influence with Government, being aware that an uncle of mine was the previous Head of the Government of Burma. Fighting shy of anything akin to nepotism, I left his requests unforwarded; and it may be that, if still alive, he will accept a copy of this book with some gratification!

We are, or were, good friends, and we reached the touching and intimate stage of exchanging photographs. He hung mine in his parlour, and his is framed in mine.

Oftentimes I have wondered which language was his medium of conscious thought. His knowledge of Chinese had become rather faulty. His Burmese was not of the best, I was credibly informed, and his use

of English was startling, but when it came to Mawken I often found it advisable to cut the painter.

Yet he was capable of hours of meditation, and had any good folk of Lincolnshire made his acquaintance they would certainly have commended him as "part witty," as the local phrase for "very wise" has it.

CHAPTER VI

"YOUR FRIEND WOULD BE I"; OR, THE TALE OF A ROMANTIC PICNIC

THE heading of this chapter is but a literal translation of a Mawken idiom. Incidentally it is evidence that the Sea Gypsies in perfectly natural speech are accustomed to frame sentences which are not weak, but strong. The significance of this idiom will become patent as this account proceeds.

I have referred to U Shwe I as the "painter," because, using him as a painter, I was enabled to follow in the wake of the Mawken *kabang*.

At the time I had no idea of the important part he played in my dealings with the Mawken, though I knew instinctively that it was well to be introduced to the Sea Gypsies by one who had known them for years, in whom they reposed a large measure of confidence. The brief sketch of his character has explained why he was so willing to serve me, up to that time an entire stranger to him.

My desire was to know the how and the wheres of Mawken life. Before I could do this I had to convey to the people a message and an assurance of great importance. The happy idea occurred to me of having a picnic out on the sands of one of the

beautiful islands of the Archipelago, in a spot free from inquisitive gazers, a place in which the Mawken would be perfectly at ease. The execution of this idea depended upon U Shwe I, firstly because he alone could persuade any of the Mawken to fall in with it, and secondly because he could secure the boat which would take me out. To have gone out in a Government launch would not have done at all, as it would have placed a gulf between the Mawken and myself at once. The whole thing had to be as natural to the Mawken as possible.

After consultation I decided to go to the island of Kalagyan, the going to and returning from which would not occupy too much of the day. The arrangements were left to the Chinaman, and the following is the note received from him in due course:—

"According to your order I keep all the saloons with their boats. I am anxious to know what time you may be able to come and meet them. Please let me know when and what time you expect them so that I am able to keep them ready.

26.10.08. "Mg Shwe I."

Those who understand Burmese will, I think, see in the use of "Mg" (abbreviation for Maung) instead of "U" the natural Chinese self-abasement.

As a result of this arrangement made by the Chinaman, Mr Walkem, Maung Bah Thet (an assistant master at the Municipal High School, Mergui) and I boarded

a pearling-boat which, through the kind offices of U Shwe I, had been placed at my service, and set out for the islands early the next morning. This pearling-boat was manned by Burmans, and accompanying us were three Mawken *kabang* rowing alongside.

Looking back over my diary of those days it is pleasant to find the following entry:—

"As we were on a mission which might result in good to the Salones—rumour of my intention to try to do something had got about—the owner of the pearler let me have the use of the boat for the day, free. I merely requited the boatmen for their labour."

This pleasing feature of the picnic was, of course, engineered by U Shwe I. The owner of the pearler did not put in an appearance, and I did not discover who he was.

There is another entry which I think ought to be quoted:

"On the previous evening a Burman photographer sold me views of Mergui and some of Salones. For the former he charged a rupee; for the latter *twelve annas* each. This was *his* contribution towards doing good for the Salones. Both are examples of Works of Merit: as indeed they were!"

And the third extract bears further testimony to the remarkable way in which my work was facilitated:

"Maung Bah Thet, who accompanied us, acted as interpreter. His was a Work of Merit, for it was a

school holiday and a great Burmese festival. He spent it in trying to benefit the Salones."

This entry is explained by the fact that one of the Mawken who accompanied us, travelling in his own *kabang*, possessed some knowledge of the Burmese language, and during the picnic it was possible for me to communicate with him by connecting up with Maung Bah Thet as interpreter. The Mawken who spoke Burmese was a Micha Blen, or Devil-Master, as U Shwe I called him. Throughout this book I have allowed this loose interpretation of the Mawken title, although I am not at all satisfied that it does justice to the man and his office. I do not think that we should be justified in calling everyone who practises invocation and hypnotism a "Devil-Master."

Burmese festivals usually fall during the fine weather, and we had selected a day upon which we could count as being fine. It was a cloudless morning, and a good breeze was blowing from the north-east. Usually in the tropics such a breeze rises in the morning and continues during the heat of the day, dying away at eventide, and we had counted on this to expedite our voyage to the island. Such breezes were common during the dry season in both Guiana and Burma. In both cases they came from the north-east, as both countries are in the Northern Hemisphere.

As it happened, there was an exception to prove the rule. The breeze died away just before ten o'clock, and our crew had to unship the huge oars provided for such

emergencies and walk the deck with them. By this I mean that to manipulate these oars it was necessary for the oarsmen to walk several paces forward to dip them, and to step several paces backward to pull them. The reach of the arm would not have sufficed, and the oars were far too heavy for the rowers to work them while in a sitting posture. Our progress was painfully slow. Instead of cutting the water and throwing up the foam at the bows, our pearler seemed to be scarcely moving at all. And as the wind dropped the heat became intense, and the glare from the shimmering surface of the calm sea was extraordinarily trying to the eyes; and I had not my shade glasses with me.

The Mawken *kabang* found no difficulty whatever in keeping alongside, and the boys pulling at the oars did not have a strenuous time of it. Frequently, to cool themselves, they would dip their heads in the sea. Occasionally one would plunge into the water for a refresher. Although conversation was not possible, it was easy for me to observe the *kabang* and their occupants; and it was noticeable how absolutely resigned they were to the conditions of the trip. Time did not matter at all, and as they knew there was no anxiety about food supplies at the end of the trip, there was nothing whatever to cause concern. While the boys, and sometimes the girls, did the pulling, the men and women reclined on their mats, under the shelters of the *kabang*, and gave themselves up to soliloquy, or blankness.

The Chinaman had lent us two of his chairs, placing them aboard the pearler before we cast off from the staging, and Mr Walkem and I found them much more restful than squatting on the deck. During my five years in the East I did not acquire the knack of supporting my weight on the fore-part of my feet while sitting on the calves of my legs. Easterners, including the Mawken, are able to do this with comfort for long periods together. The muscles of the toes and legs have to be trained to it.

Upon an occasion like this one is able to observe such things, and, while of exciting incident there is none, it is possible to note those customs which do not obtrude themselves.

Nothing of special note occurred during this voyage, and we reached Kalagyan at a few minutes past eleven. I had had an early *chota hazri*, and I was beginning to feel ready for breakfast. The anchor was heaved overboard, and the pearler rode the sea as close to shore as was possible. The tide was still running out—this had helped us on the outward journey—and we had to allow for some further lessening of the depth. Mr Walkem and I were beached on the backs of Burmese carriers. Though it is not a dignified way of reaching land, it is supposed to add to the dignity of the fair-skinned races. I was not sorry to discover, later on, that uncivilised peoples take it as an indication that we are not hard enough to be able to endure roughing it as they do. The idea of "roughing it" does not, I

found, occur to them. With them to wade ashore with water up to the waist is a commonplace occurrence. It is not a subject to be enlarged upon here, yet it is well to take note that in such things we do not always strike uncivilised people in the same light as we like to think they regard us! I have enough information, gleaned from my experiences in Burma, to write a whole chapter upon this subject.

The Burmans conveniently tucked up their gaily coloured silk *lungyis*; they entered the sea with the water to their waist, and after putting us down upon the sands they just shook out their *lungyis* and allowed them to dry as they walked about in the glorious sunshine.

We had landed on the south-west of the island, and there was a fine sweep of golden sand which made a beautiful fringe to the green of the jungle with which Kalagyan was covered. To the left of our landing-place we espied a Burmese house, enclosed on three sides by a small plantation, plainly indicated, even at a distance, by the graceful crowns of coco-nut trees.

While some of our men went off in search of firewood, and came back to light the camp-fires for the preparation of our meal, others of us strolled off to the Burman's house to see if we could purchase a few milk coco-nuts. The Burman was at home and was willing to sell, so one of his boys soon swarmed up a tree and, twisting off some nuts, threw them to the ground. Meanwhile we found the shade of the trees luxurious.

In Burma I did not have a retinue of servants, as becomes necessary if one has caste-men. Instead I employed a Tamil Christian, a Roman Catholic, who acted as cook, valet and parlour-maid. (Water was laid on at the house, so there was no need for a *pani-wallah*, or waterman.) This Tamil "boy," formerly a servant at Government House, had brought a clean white tablecloth, which, not to hurt his feelings, I allowed him to spread out upon the sands. He had chosen a spot where we would be sheltered by the trees, and the cloth was kept in place by stones laid at each corner; not, however, that there was enough breeze (for the breeze was blowing again) to carry it off. Leaving the rice a-cooking, he opened several tins of salmon (which had come all the way from Canada), and arranged the glasses and ginger-beers. Our meal was to be of rice, salmon and ginger-beer, followed by the flesh of the coco-nuts (we had already quaffed the milk).

When everything was "just so" each of us was served with a well-heaped plate of beautifully boiled rice, from which the most nutritious part had *not* been polished off, and a liberal helping of salmon—liberal enough to be termed "vulgar" in places in which the conventions prevail. Each of the Mawken was served in like manner, for we shared and shared alike.

It was particularly interesting to me to notice that, upon receiving their plates of rice and salmon, they walked slowly to the water's edge and wiped the salmon into the sea. It was not the first time in my

travels that I had seen salmon treated in this way. Evidently this food out of a tin was regarded with suspicion. What might not be the effect of eating it?

Upon a later occasion, during a run through the Archipelago, I offered some cake to some Mawken boys and they refused it. When I asked the reason why, they replied: "We do not know to eat it." Perhaps it is wise not to partake of anything which has not been mentioned in the tales of your grandfather. Though in such connections it is ludicrous to us, this guiding principle has probably been found useful in the past. Such things are remarkably interesting from a psychological point of view, for they illustrate ways in which ignorance produces prejudice. And when we see these things in others we are led to wonder how far like prejudice may be found in us, if only we could see ourselves as others see us.

Having so disposed of the unknown "red stuff," the Mawken set to work to eat up the rice. This they did in the manner in which the Nun in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* ate her food, with nature's fork. Seldom do we realise how modern are our spoons and forks in the use we make of them to-day.

After meat came the drink. The Mawken had no objection to ginger-beer, as they had visited Mergui frequently, and had seen ginger-beer on the stalls by the road-side, and probably had not only seen others drink it, but had tasted of it themselves. They drank from the bottles, as my "boy" had not thought he was

called upon to provide them with glasses. It was very amusing to watch their attempts to make the glass balls in the necks of the emptied bottles stick at the top after the ginger-beer was out. How they inverted them, shook them violently and turned them about, and repeatedly examined them with curiosity and astonishment! Unfortunately it was not then in my power to explain to them the action of the gas in the bottles when filled, and the impossibility of getting the balls to remain in position when the bottles were empty.

The opportunity afforded by the picnic was taken to write down some Mawken words. Also, after some expansive explanations through Maung Bah Thet, the devil-master was persuaded to show me how he plied his trade in his capacity of healer of diseases. I shall not forestall a chapter upon this subject by giving any details here.

After our meal we rested for an hour in the shadow of the trees, during which time I closely observed the Mawken and their boats, which were drawn up on the beach; and I think that they, no less than I, felt the sympathy of silence.

In the early afternoon we re-embarked. Our return trip was slow, as the wind was fitful, and it was late when we tied up again at the Mergui landing.

The romance of this picnic was greater to me than words can portray. I am aware that the account which I have given of it is almost trivial. The real significance of this picnic lay in the fact that it was

the way which occurred to me of telling the Mawken in actions, which would speak louder than words (especially words through an interpreter): "Your friend would be I."

The kind offices of U Shwe I had enabled me to do this.

CHAPTER VII

AFLOAT IN A MAWKEN SHIP: A VOYAGE TO MAIDEN ISLE

HAVING, in the way described, told the Mawken people that it was my desire to be friendly, I decided, upon the occasion of my next quarterly visit to Mergui, to try to make some further progress.

Most of the people live all the year round in their *kabang*, and all of them spend the north-east monsoon afloat. Some few, however, have resting-places on land. The nearest approach to a village is at Victoria Point, where eight or nine huts may be seen on the foreshore alongside the jetty. In other cases I have seen single huts well hidden in the jungle.

U Shwe I told me of a "settlement" on Dala Island well out to sea, in a line with Mergui. Here lived a Mawken of rather forceful character, whom someone with a great deal of poet's licence referred to as "the Prince of the Mawken." It may be allowable to speak of a man with dominating character as a "prince among men," yet it would not be correct to say that the Mawken have or acknowledge a chief of any kind.

It was my wish to make a voyage to this

"settlement," and to sleep the night there. Also it seemed to be advisable to make the voyage in a *kabang*, in Mawken style, instead of in a Government launch.

Again U Shwe I was my conjurer, and through his good services a *kabang* was placed at my disposal and arrangements for the voyage were quickly completed.

At this point it is advisable to make a slight digression. Three years later, after I had taken the Census of the Mawken, a little book came into my hands, through the kindness of Mr Morgan Webb, to whom I shall have to make further reference. It contained notes made by a Dr Anderson, a linguist, who chanced upon some of the Mawken. To him, as to all others, they were known as Salons. Dr Anderson was in the habit of making vocabularies of words of different peoples, obtained through interpreters, and comparing the various vocabularies he had so collected. He would seem to have found a Salon who could speak Malay and to have used a Malay interpreter who could speak English. Dr Anderson made no attempt, so far as record goes, to learn the language. He, like myself, conceived of the idea of voyaging in a *kabang*, and mentions the fact that when the boat was brought he decided not to go. . . . The smell was too much for him!

Although these people live on the sea, with "water, water everywhere," they have a very dirty custom.

Their staple food is rice, which they obtain by barter, and fish, which they spear. Much of their cooking is done as they move about, and instead of cleaning the

entrails of the fish over the side of the boat into the sea, they clean them into the boat itself. Similarly when they wash out a pot in which they have been cooking, they pour the washings into the boat. The result is that the bilge of the boat is awash with an evil-smelling slush! When it is borne in mind that this is done in tropical regions, it is not difficult for anyone even in colder climes to judge as to the strength of the odours.

It would, of course, be easy to dismiss the matter with the contempt and disgust of superior persons, an attitude which European peoples frequently adopt when they meet with "savages" whose ways they have not studied.

Sympathetic understanding, which is the world's great need, usually helps us to see that such customs have reasons behind them, even if we may be able to show that the reasons are bad ones, or that there may be other ways of managing things.

The Mawken ships, even with the *maw* added, lie very low upon the surface of the water and are the homes of the people. While the adults on board should be well able to take care of themselves, it would not be easy to prevent the little children from dabbling a hand or a foot in the water, especially when the air is still and they feel the heat. Sometimes the boys will plunge overboard, swim about and cool themselves, and resume work at the oars.

Had the Mawken adopted the custom of cleaning

the fish over the sides and throwing refuse over, it would not have taken very long for a species of "submarine" to get into the habit of following these craft about, on the look-out for supplies. These waters abound in sharks.

The Mawken have no buckets nor pails, and apparently the idea of providing some such receptacle had not occurred to them. At any rate it has not materialised.

At the time of my projected trip I was unaware of the Dr Anderson incident. I was, however, aware of the usual condition of these *kabang*. Accordingly it was arranged that the bilge should have a very special cleaning, by pouring in copious supplies of sea-water and baling out several times over while the boat was drawn up on shore. Buckets were borrowed for the purpose.

It should perhaps be mentioned that the Mawken periodically swill out the bilge, but these periods might well be of much shorter duration than is usually the case.

Even after the special swill there remained some washings at the bottom of the boat, but these were well diluted and were quite mild. My Tamil boy (his name was Anthony) was careful to buy for me a new sleeping-mat, since we were not taking cots, and in the East hammocks are rarely used. I did not see one in use for camping, though I travelled about a great deal. My own precautions consisted of taking a bottle of

eau-de-Cologne, with which my handkerchief was treated.

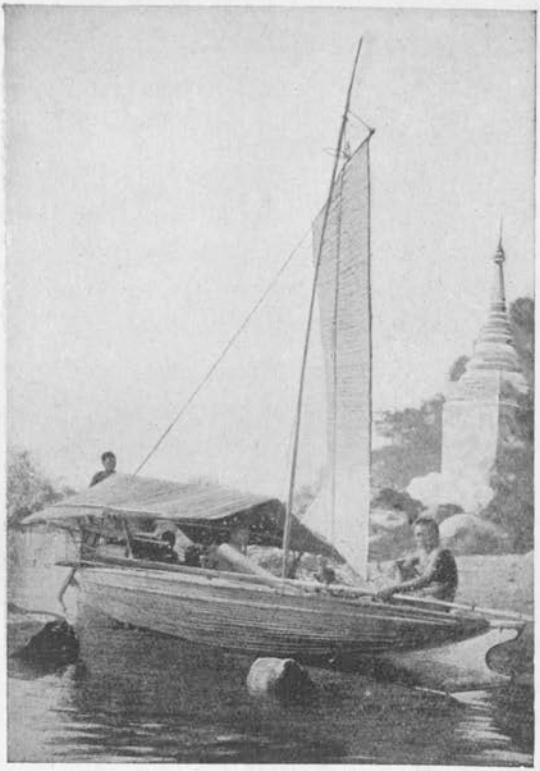
We had had *chota hazri*, our "little breakfast," very early, at the circuit house, and we were down to superintend the washing of the boat. Ere the sun was high in the heavens we were afloat. My Mawken companions consisted of four boys and a man, the same "devil-master" who had been of the picnic party. It was significant that the women and girls usually inhabiting this home had been put out of the way. I understood that they had been taken into another *kabang* to spend a couple of days with a family of Mawken friends.

The morning "broke clean," and although the time of year was not "safe," being at the close of the south-west monsoon, we had hopes of a fair passage.

There was no wind and it was necessary to use oars, so the four little boys unshipped the oars and set to work. Again it was "every man for himself." Although the tide was ebbing and we were helped by it, progress was very slow, and we occupied about three hours in getting well clear of Palaw. Then we headed for Kalagyan, across a stretch of open water.

Now the sky was overcast and black storm-heads appeared in several directions. The wind got up and, coming from the south-west, was contrary to us. Soon there was a ripple on the sea, and then came horses'-manes, and the rain descended.

My new mat had been spread over the mats on the



KABANG IN SAIL.

Taken off Palaw. Shows Burmese pagoda on rocky foreshore. The "front step" of the kabang is clearly seen.

KABANG.

The floating homes of the Sea Gypsies. On the muddy foreshore of Mergui, with the tide at ebb.

deck or floor, and as I had soon tired of sitting cross-legged under the roof, I had been reclining with an elbow on my pillow. It is not possible to stand up under the roof of the house portion of the boat. Whenever I remained still, out would come armies of wood-lice of various sizes, from a quarter of an inch to an inch and a half in length, many-legged creatures which seemed to enjoy playing and wrestling upon the smooth surface of the mats. Whenever I moved they gat them away to their dens. These things are scavengers, which feed upon the offal awash in the boat, and being well fed they multiply exceedingly.

Those who have walked the forests of the world, or have studied the ways of wild life, are aware that nature provides everywhere a splendid army of scavengers, and takes care not to leave messes about the world. Man is the culprit when it comes to messing up the world, and his scavenging is often poorly done.

The sea became rough and waves poured into the *kabang*. The boys left the oars and were kept busy baling as hard as they could go. They used their two hands put together and cupped the water out, one only having a piece of gourd.

We had to do a lot of tacking, and a sudden gust of wind brought down the sail by lifting it high and slipping the rope off the fork. The bottom section of the sail had been beaten to shreds, and the sail was shortened. Just as we were approaching the rocky

channel to the south of Kalagyan the sail was brought down again, and the force of the wind gave the boat such a list that we shipped water along nearly the whole length of one side. The baling-hole was not large enough to allow of all of us working simultaneously, and the work was done by the boys and the devil-master. It seemed to me that the buffeting we were receiving would smash up the fragile sides of the *kabang* and we all should be numbered amongst the *maw-ken* (sea-drowned). The devil-master went astern again and manipulated the steering-paddle as we bobbed and plunged our way through the channel. How he avoided all the rocks, I do not know.

At the extreme end of the island my attention was drawn to a strip of red salu tied to a stick which was fixed firmly amongst the rocks. This piece of cloth had been placed there by the Mawken to mark a dangerous channel, and more particularly to act as a charm for good luck.

The world over we find this faith in a mascot or a charm, and it is interesting to note the witness it bears to a common belief in the oneness of the universe. All things are regarded as affecting each other, and the movements or action of some are believed to indicate movements of others or to affect their course. The notion may be all right: its application seems to be mostly unreasonable, unreasoned and unscientific. It is evidence of a pessimism which finds solace in abandoning oneself to blind fatalism when in contact with

powers men know not how to control. Human nature is the same everywhere, and civilised peoples cannot justly scorn and ridicule the uncivilised.

That which is of special interest to me is the fact that red is supposed to possess a special virtue as a charm. I found the same belief amongst the Indians of South America, who make much use of annatto for like purposes. It is possible that it has some connection with the shedding of blood, as amongst the Israelites, though I have not been able to prove that this is everywhere the case.

When we were safely through this dangerous passage we encountered bigger seas, and the *kabang* pitched uncomfortably. It rode the seas well, though it often did so at a seemingly dangerous angle.

It had been possible to have breakfast, and we had made a good meal. Tea, however, was out of the question. We determined to fast until we should reach Dala Isle. Should we ever reach it?

Down came the sail for the third time, and for the third time it was shortened. We had now only one section left, and the sea was far too rough for the use of oars, even if the boys could cease their frantic efforts to prevent the boat from becoming water-logged. The storm increased in fury and for a time we made no progress in the direction in which we desired to travel. The *micha-blen* became seriously concerned. He left the steering-paddle, balanced his way along to the bows, and squatting down there began a low droning

incantation which suggested despair and resignation. Once again the Sea Gypsies were to be called upon to prove the rightness of their name—and we with them.

The incantation addressed to the evil powers which work behind all storms was succeeded by a whistling. Once more, as upon so many other occasions, a comparison was suggested. In 1888 my brother and I came to England from Demerara in a Norwegian barque called the *Gwendoline*. For two or three days we were becalmed. The sea was like a sheet of glass, and we boys amused ourselves—not then realising the cruelty—by catching stormy petrels on tiny hooks baited with fat pork. The sailors were sure that if we caught Mother Carey's chickens, as they called the petrels, we should have bad weather. Nevertheless they spent a great deal of their time "whistling for the wind." The wind came in due course, and the main topmast was snapped and the boom with its sail brought down. While the sailors whistled for the wind, the *micha-blen* whistled for its abatement.

The wind did abate after sunset, and we were carried on a rough sea, as on the backs of wild horses, to the beach of Dala Isle, arriving there at about nine o'clock at night. Fleecy clouds were racing across the sky, and the sea and the island were lighted up by a glorious moon.

We dropped anchor, as it was thought to be unsafe to try to beach the boat. The anchor was a large

bellied stone made fast to a thick grass rope. At first we deemed it would be better to forgo a meal and to sleep aboard the *kabang*, waiting until dawn to land; but this idea was abandoned when we found that the boat plunged so badly that sleep was rendered impossible. Near to us was anchored another *kabang*, the owners of which were ashore. I removed my shoes and socks, tucked up my trousers and was carried through the breakers. Anthony brought my new sleeping-mat and the Mawken looked after the supplies. Upon the beach, which was sandy, were three "houses." The sea was already beginning to flow up under them. These houses had the appearance of rather large dog-kennels built upon sticks (posts they could not be called). The floor was about eight feet off the ground; the walls were about four feet high and the roof sat down upon them. In shape the houses were nearly square. Walls and roof were made of the leaves of the *dunnee* palm, and the floor, which allowed free ventilation from below, was of sticks. In the middle house of the three we saw the glimmer of a light, so we hailed the inmates, who opened a mat door and lowered a bamboo ladder for us to ascend. We clambered up and crawled into the house, the roof of which was much too low to enable us to stand. At one side of the single room some earth had been spread, and upon this a wood fire was burning: there being no chimney and no smoke-hole, the smoke filtered through the roof.

In the house we saw a man and two women. They told us that the so-called "prince" was away in his *kabang* and was not likely to be back for days. The Mawken made us welcome, and Anthony spread my mat, which was all the bed-making necessary, and promptly set to work to toast some bread and open up a small tin of melted butter. As is often the case in the tropics, the tinned butter was in a fluid condition and could be poured out like thick cream.

I do not want to lay too much stress upon our gastronomic exercises. Eating does take an important place in our life, and so one need not be ashamed to say that the meal in the Mawken house after the day of strain was partaken of with epicurean enjoyment.

When I turned my attention to the Mawken who had received us, questions were asked through Anthony and the devil-master, both of whom had a knowledge of Burmese. The Mawken man answered the questions put to him. Immediately I addressed myself to the women they moved away from the fire-light and crouched in a darker corner. Though they would not talk about "wintering"[1] and "summering" a stranger, it is commonly the case that people such as the Mawken do not regard conversation between their women and strange men as being in accord with the proprieties. We are supposed to require an introduction, even in civilised countries; so we join with them in bearing witness to those sex questions which psycho-

[1] Suffolk idioms.

analysts have recently brought so much to the fore. While truly natural, they are not of necessity nasty, and we see that race prejudice is not all on one side. A real knowledge of the outlook of other peoples would make the "colourless" peoples of the world understand that the darker races do not regard them as superior in all those things which really matter. The Mawken do, however, regard us with wonderment.

Finding that conversational efforts with the womenfolk would not, at this stage, be regarded as proofs of true friendship, I abandoned the attempt, spread myself out on the mat, clad just as I was, and fell asleep.

Very early the following morning we were astir. *Chota hazri* was taken in the house, and while the belongings were being transported to the *kabang* I strolled along the sands to inspect the *katoi ka-e*, or devil-posts.

These posts were two in number, and were planted just above high-water mark, where jungle growth and sands met. Both were of roughly squared timber split in half, one square making the two posts. They were rudely decorated with black bars, curves and circles, and towards the top each post was tapered, and above the tapered part was a head somewhat after the shape of an admiral's hat. The wood selected was hard and durable, and the *katoi ka-e* should last for years without rotting.

These *katoi ka-e* are taken to indicate that Dala Isle

is the abode of a kindly disposed power, under the protection of which the Mawken may plant their pine-apples, bananas and ochroes, and rest in their houses when not roving the sea as Gypsies.

The curious may like to know that the posts are about five feet in height, seven inches in width and between three and four inches in thickness.

Dala Isle is small and hilly, and the Mawken plantation was made upon the slope of the rising behind the huts. There was a clearing for the plantation, and the remainder of the island was covered with jungle, from which much of the small wood had been taken for firing.

The sea was still disturbed, as a result of its beating up on the previous day. The weather was fine, though not "safe." We boarded the *kabang*, hoisted our piece of sail and, helped by the boys at the oars, we made fair headway. When the tide began to flow again we made rapid progress, and the oars were shipped. The boys, to cool themselves, plunged into the sea and disported themselves in the water, swimming and diving with ease. The Mawken are almost amphibious creatures. When they had had enough they returned to the *kabang*, and having no clothes save loin-cloths, they allowed themselves to dry in the sunshine.

We reached Mergui just as the coasting steamer was preparing to heave anchor for the return trip to Maulmein. Anthony hastened ashore in a *sampan*,

fetched the remainder of my kit from the circuit house and stepped on to the companion-ladder just as the propeller began to revolve. We had returned only just in time to catch the fortnightly steamer home.

On board, we learned from the captain and passengers that, fearing for my safety in the storm of yesterday, arrangements were being planned to send out a search-party when my arrival made it unnecessary.

CHAPTER VIII

FRIENDLY OVERTURES & THE WARNING

AFTER my trip to Maiden Island my interest in the Mawken was thoroughly aroused. I sympathised with them in their sorry plight, and desired to help them, if it should be within my power to improve their lot.

In order to understand the course adopted by me it is necessary to recollect the difference between two words in our language which are, often with great carelessness, made to do duty for each other. These two words are Pity and Sympathy. We can pity a dog, and we can pity those fellow-humans whom we think we have a right to regard as inferiors. Many people find it easy to serve those whom they acknowledge as their superiors. Less easily do they find they can serve those whom they regard as their equals. But peculiarly difficult do many people find it to serve those whom they think they may justly regard as their inferiors. They are prepared to dominate and to rule them "for their good," and they will seek to impose their superior ways upon them. It requires clear thinking to see the principles and to differentiate between unessentials and essentials. Life and Civilisation are often confused.

As Mrs Chandra Sen, the Indian authoress, poetess and lecturer has told us plainly, when speaking in this country for the people of India: "We do not want your pity. We resent it. What we want is your sympathetic understanding." So a non-Christian (for Mrs Chandra Sen is a member of the Brohma-Somaj, or Indian Theistic church) reminds us of the need of Sympathy. I do not claim that I had thought the matter out fully. All I claim is that my object was to make it quite clear to the Mawken that I wished to be not a master, but a friend.

Upon my next visit to Mergui some Mawken were sent for, to assemble at the house of U Shwe I, and we had a pow-wow. It is evident how useful to me was the Chinaman in these early days. It was explained to the Mawken, through him, that I should like some of them to come with me to Maulmein. Naturally, they wanted to know why. It was then explained that I wished them to teach me their language, and as I could not leave my work to live amongst them at that time, if some of them came to live with me they could help me to acquire a knowledge of their language, and that when I had learned it I could put it into writing for them (as they had no script of their own), and could afterwards teach some of them to write in their own language. Their next inquiry was as to the number of Mawken I desired to have to live with me, and whether I wanted men and women or boys and girls. I told them that one or two men and one

or two boys might come. It did not seem to me to be advisable, at first at any rate, to take women and girls into such different surroundings as would be found at Maulmein. The children present were much interested, and my hopes began to rise; but when I laid my hand upon a boy's shoulder and asked, through U Shwe I, if he would like to come with me, the boy became thoroughly scared and shrank back. The other children immediately made themselves scarce by moving off into the road.

U Shwe I strongly backed up my appeal, and talked to the Mawken for a long while, emphasising his remarks with impressive gestures. Could I have understood his words, I expect I should hardly have known myself from the glowing description he gave of me! Probably I was represented as being one of the best, the kindest and most illustrious men on earth! This conference came to naught. In the afternoon we tried again, and again without success.

In the meanwhile the news was spreading amongst the people, and Mawken whom I had not seen before turned up at Mergui and came to the house of the Chinaman to listen to my proposals.

No count was kept of the number of conferences we had, but at length one of the men said he would come with me and undertook to bring one of his three little boys. I asked about the other two, and he said that they were with his father-in-law in a *kabang*, which never visited Mergui, remaining amongst the

far-off islands. This led to my inquiring about his wife, and he told me that she was dead. He was just the kind of man I needed, as, having no wife to leave behind, no hardship would be inflicted upon him in keeping him at Maulmein. He was made to understand that he would be brought down to Mergui when my quarterly visits took place, and so would be able to see his people every three moons, and would not be wholly cut off from them. This man's name was Nbai. His little boy, who appeared to be about ten years of age, was named Koshan.

It occurred to me that Koshan would probably find things rather dull when the novelty had worn off if he had no playmate who could speak his language and understand him, and this was explained to the people. They saw the sense of it, and further inquiries were made. After a great deal of confabulation another boy was produced, whose name was Chali. He was probably about twelve years of age. Nbai I judged to be about thirty-five. Koshan was a nice-looking little fellow with a cheery smile. His hair was black and glossy and when brushed it would lie as arranged. Chali could hardly be said to be handsome. His lips, though not thick, protruded somewhat; his nose was of the pug type, and his hair simply bristled from his head. I found afterwards that both boys had pleasant dispositions, and neither of them gave me any cause for anxiety during the years they were with me at Maulmein.

It may sound paradoxical, yet it was when the

decision had at length been made that the real tussle began. Whoever in England has offered for foreign service and has not experienced the hostility of relatives and friends? Every tropical country is a "white man's grave." In spite of the many travelled people, in spite of the many who have lived abroad and have returned safely to settle down and to pass their remaining years in the homeland, foreign countries are still regarded as "rough" and "trying." And much of the world outside of the British Isles is classed as "barbarous."

The fear of the unknown is the same the world over, and so Nbai, Koshan and Chali were subjected to a hot fire. First of all Maulmein was so far away. It was too far away. Somewhere nearer to the islands would not have been so bad. It would not have held so many terrors. To die away from "home" was regarded as a possibility which could not be faced with equanimity. Death in a distant place was so much more dreadful. No reasons could be given, it was all a matter of "feeling." And I would not have them think that I held that sentiment has no rightful place in life. There were, so they argued, many kinds of sicknesses, of which they had had no experience. Nbai and the boys might fall victims to one of these, and the two other little boys away in the far-off islands might never see their father again, and their mother was dead. So the warning was reiterated:

"*Matai ka bi-ing tawkaw.*" ("Dead will be you, *certainly.*")

How solemn was the warning tone of that word "*tawkaw*." And how impressive to hear it taken up, first by one, then by another: "*Tawkaw*" . . . "*Tawkaw*" . . . "*Tawkaw*."

I knew that argument would be useless, so I allowed these expressions free way, and then a silence ensued. I gave them time to think, and I repeated, through U Shwe I, my offer, mentioning again some of the "good things" it contained.

At a later date, when I was visiting Victoria Point, the wife of the Sub-Divisional Officer informed me that upon several occasions she had induced some Mawken to work for her. There are, as I have previously mentioned, several huts there, on the mud-flat alongside the jetty, and the Mawken are frequently "in residence." Mrs Buchanan told me that whenever these Mawken came to work for her they always took the precaution of wearing charms. Unfortunately it did not occur to me at the time to inquire whether this practice had been acquired as a result of their contact with the Malays, or whether it was a custom proper to the Mawken themselves. From whom or from what they expected hurt it is impossible for me to explain. The question remains as one of those for future inquiry. I did not find any Mawken wearing charms; Nbai and the boys certainly did not wear any, and I did not hear any talk about such things during all the time they were with me at Maulmein.

The terms of my offer were allowed time to soak in,

and in due course the spirit of adventure overcame the spirit of fear. Details were again discussed and everything seemed to be smoothed out; it seemed that a settlement had been reached, and arrangements were in train for booking the passages of the three Mawken when another difficulty arose.

Nbai entered into close and earnest conversation with U Shwe I, and it appeared that he was trying to persuade the Chinaman to tell me something, which the latter was reluctant to do. Nbai was insistent, and frequently, in reply to something the Chinaman said, he uttered an emphatic "Ha!" (the Mawken word for "not"). Finding that he availed nothing by his protests, U Shwe I, with some hesitation in his speech, gave me to understand the subject of their animated conversation:

"Nbai says, 'If I come with you, will you give me opium?'"

This was rather staggering. Although I knew, at that time, nothing of the opium traffic in Burma, and possessed only hearsay evidence of the alleged results of the drug, I had a strong prejudice against it. Some rumours of the anti-opium legislation with regard to China had reached me, and I possessed pictures of opium dens as they existed in Trinidad. (I did not know, then, that one of these photographs showing such a den, while depicting several Chinamen smoking, showed only one man smoking an *opium* pipe!) My prejudice against opium was as strong as the Mawken

prejudice against tinned salmon, and, like that prejudice, it was at that time rooted in ignorance.

After some consideration my reply was given in the form of a definite negative: "No, I cannot; opium is not good." Upon this a further conversation ensued between the Chinaman and the Mawken, and U Shwe I once more tried persuasion. Nbai was obdurate, and the Chinaman had to announce the decision:

"Nbai says, 'If you will not give me opium I will not come with you; for if I do not have opium I shall die.'"

I replied that it was nonsense to talk like that, and he was equally convinced that he would certainly die were the drug not obtainable. We had reached an impasse, and for the time it seemed that all my hopes would be dashed to the ground.

CHAPTER IX

HOW THE MAWKEN OBTAIN THEIR LIVELIHOOD: SOME EFFECTS OF THE OPIUM TRAFFIC

UP to the present I have not explained how the Mawken get their living. It is now necessary to make the explanation.

It has already been told how the Mawken live the roving life of Gypsies of the Sea. A few have huts, which they use as a haven of refuge upon occasion, and others have huts which they use as their base, from which they make frequent and extended tours in their *kabang*. Most of the Mawken do not come near to the mainland at all. They depend upon those who visit the ports for their supplies, or they procure the required commodities from the few Chinese and Malay traders who do a hawking trade in their house-boats. Business is done by barter generally.

The Mawken used to do all the diving there was for the pearl oyster. Even if the oyster contained no pearl, and not even a blister, the shells, being of the same stuff as that of which pearls are made (hence the name "mother-of-pearl"), were of value, as they are to-day. Some of these shells when cleaned and reduced to the limits of true mother-of-pearl measure ten inches across and eight inches deep. These shells,

mounted on silver clasp stands, make exquisite sweets-dishes. The Burmese and Chinese of Mergui frequently cut the shells to shape, and carve and chase them, making very pretty mother-of-pearl tea and dessert plates.

Besides these shells, the Mawken dive for the sea-snails, of which there are two varieties, called by them *ochan* and *ochau*. These shells also are of mother-of-pearl, and are used for the manufacture of pearl buttons.

Most of the shallow-diving areas are outfished as regards the oysters, and the deep diving is done by Filipinos, who go down in diving-suits. The Mawken are accustomed to naked diving, and they have not taken to the suits. As a consequence most of the pearl fishing is taken out of their hands, and they have lost their chief means of livelihood. It is a matter of fear and prejudice again. They do not like the idea of getting into these strange diving-suits, being at the mercy of other people, who lower and haul them up. Their prejudice is hardly likely to be removed when they observe, as those who visit Mergui do observe, how many of the men who go down in diving-suits suffer from paralysis of the legs, which in the early stages gives them a noticeably unsteady gait. These divers are, for the most part, opium-eaters, and I am not in a position to dogmatise about causes and effects.

Before U Shwe I opened the eyes of the Government

to the existence of the pearl fisheries anyone could dive anywhere and sell anywhere. Now a licence has to be secured for every pearling-boat, and the right to collect is sold. If the Mawken do any diving, they must sell to those who have bought the right to collect.

The intention of this was, not to hinder the Mawken from earning their livelihood; it was to protect those who paid for the fisheries. The result, as far as the Mawken are concerned, has been bad, because those who have secured the licences have been very unscrupulous.

There are also sea-slug fisheries. I have been shown three species of these slugs. One is grey, the other is the colour of sand, and the third is indifferent. The slugs are from seven to nine inches in length, and are raked up from the sand-banks, in which they half bury themselves, leaving part of the body protruding. This is why it is easy to rake them out. The slugs are spread on the sands and thoroughly sun-dried, and are then disposed of for the Chinese market. They are used by the Chinese for broth and are accounted a delicacy.

Besides the shells and slugs there are the edible bird's-nests. The Government issues a licence for the collection of these, and in the Mergui Archipelago the actual collecting is done by the Mawken. The nests are made by a species of swift, which may be seen skimming over the sea, the rocks and the

islands. The shape of the nests is similar to that of the English swallow's, like the half of a shallow cup, and it is affixed to rocks, on the sides of the caves, which are existent in some of the islands, or it may be found on the face of a cliff. The Mawken are agile, and are clever in scaling the rocks, or in lowering themselves down the face of the cliff. They collect the nests in which no eggs have been laid. For the information of those who may not happen to know, it should be mentioned that the nests are composed of a species of seaweed which has undergone a process of semi-digestion in the swift's mouth. There is a ready market for the nests in China, and in the Chinese colonies of Burma-Malaya and the Straits Settlements. They are used, as are the slugs, for broth-making. I have not tasted them myself, but I suppose that the flavour is not dissimilar to that of the *lava* bread with which I have been regaled in South Wales. This *lava* bread is also made of a seaweed. I am given to understand that in the Mergui Archipelago the chief nesting-places are St Matthew's Island, The Gregories, Elephant Island and Turret Island. The names of these last two islands have been suggested by their shape.

In recent years the Mawken have been induced to collect and bring in bark for tanning. There are many mangrove swamps along the coast, and around those islands where river currents have deposited their

burdens of silt. The bark of the mangrove is one of the barks collected for this purpose. Another requirement is cord-wood, for use on the Government launches, and the Mawken sometimes bring in supplies, which they have cut on the islands.

If the weather conditions are taken into account, as well as the fragile nature of the *kabang*, it will be realised that, if the well-built pearlers have to cease operations during the south-west monsoon, much more are the *kabang* restricted in their movements. Nearly every means of livelihood is shut off during the rough weather. The swifts do not build nests, and there are none to be collected.

When the Mawken have anything to barter they are able to procure supplies of rice, which is their staple food. They get pieces of cloth, for use as loin-cloths for the men, and plain skirts (new, or second-hand) and strips of cloth for the use of the women. I have seen Mawken, in the distant islands, with only a few inches of cloth to cover their nakedness; and I have been informed that some of the people — like the Andamanese — wear no clothing whatever. Having no settled life, they have no cloth-making industry, and they are wholly dependent upon barter for any material they possess. Clothes, or cloths, are worn until they wear into rags. They are dipped, but not washed.

With the rice they eat fish, and this fish they can get by barter, or by harpoon. I have not heard if

they themselves eat the green-snail, which, when collected, they place into a pot of boiling water, until the "oyster" within drops out. This "oyster," like the sea-slug, is sun-dried and bartered.

The fish most easily harpooned is the nga-u, which swims on the surface of the water and moves very slowly. When the nga-u is sighted the *kabang* give chase. In each of the *kabang* a Mawken stands at the prow, harpoon in hand, and the fish is struck by several harpoons before it can lash out and do damage. Noosed ropes are passed over the head and the tail, and the fish is towed ashore, cut up into strips and sun-dried. The greater part of it may be bartered.

Owing to their having been molested so much in the past, and to persecutions even in the present, the Mawken have not emulated the Burmese and the Malays in the construction of fish-traps. They are unable, therefore, to secure large and regular supplies of fish.

Some of the Mawken keep pariahs, which they train to hunt wild pig and deer on the larger islands, such as Kissering and King's Island. The dogs are said to be trained by being placed on an island for a time and left to look after themselves. When they have learned to secure their own food, the Mawken take them on board again and make use of them as hunters.

Other food eaten by the Mawken includes limpets, which the children collect from the rocks when the tide is at ebb. Crabs, too, are caught and eaten. There

is in the Mergui district the soldier crab, which has a singly developed claw which it brandishes aloft. The colour of this crab is a brilliant scarlet, even before it is boiled.

On the few small plantations pawpaws are grown, and this fruit may, in season, be secured from the Burmese and Malays by barter. A favourite dish with the Mawken is a stew of fish and pawpaw. It reminds one of a fellow-student at Lincoln who on Fridays in Lent used to flavour the somewhat tasteless boiled cod and rice with a liberal helping of marmalade!

Pawpaws and bananas are sliced and sun-dried on the roofs of the *kabang*, and small supplies are stored. Roots of certain plants, and wild fruits are eaten, when they can be found. At the worst season of the year roots may be the only food for days on end.

The Mawken have found it convenient to barter their goods to the Chinese and Malay traders, and wherever such a trader is encountered one is almost certain to see a fleet of *kabang* accompanying the junk. In some respects this is good, as the Mawken find an ever-present market, and they are protected from raids and molestation.

But the harm accruing overbalances the good. Not only do the Mawken receive only a quarter, or even a tenth, of the right value of their goods, but they have been compelled to take part of their payment in opium.

In my diary, under date Tuesday, 14th February

"KENNELS ON STILTS."

Mawken "winter quarters" at Victoria Point. There is an open staging in front of the hut, built after the Malay pattern.

1911, I have an entry which is but one amongst several on the same subject:

"These men live amongst the islands and compel the Mawken to work for them. The Mawken say they threaten to kill them if they decline. They make them take part of their pay in opium. Two at least of these men are unlicensed. They get their opium from Bokpyin. The Mawken say that they do not want to become opium consumers. It weakens them and makes them poor, and miserable in mind (*chaka*). Being induced and forced to take opium, they must have it or they will die. The Chinamen tell them this . . . they will die. And as leaving it off is a painful process, they take the bad feelings as a sign of approaching death."

As we forced opium upon China (it was good for the revenues of India, and it did not matter in those days how we treated the "heathen Chinee"), so the Chinese traders have forced the dope upon the Mawken, well knowing that, once acquired, the habit cannot be given up, without medical treatment, of which the Mawken know nothing. The Mawken addicted to the drug become virtually the slaves of the traders, who alone can supply it. And these traders, besides underpaying the Mawken for their shells, slugs, nests, etc., dole out the opium wage at an exorbitant charge.

The opium traffic in India and Burma is a Government-controlled business. Shops are licensed for each district, and the shopkeeper buys "the right to sell" at

public auction. The right exists for a term of years. The shopkeeper gets his stores of opium from the Government. During the years I was in Burma opium was retailed at its weight in silver. A tola of opium was sold for a rupee. The tola is the weight of a rupee. In paying the Mawken the trader retailed the opium at a valuation of sixteen rupees a tola, making a profit on the retail price of fifteen hundred per cent. When we take this in conjunction with the valuation allowed on the shells and slugs and nests, we see that the Mawken disposed of their goods at rates which were from ten to sixteen thousand per cent. below the rates they should have received! This means that, work as they will, they are kept in a state of abject poverty, while the opium habit is surely, though gradually, sapping their energies.

Certain peoples of India and Burma are placed by the Government on a "Protected List"; such are the Burmese. This means that only the Burmans already addicted to the habit can (in theory) secure supplies. Each consumer is, in effect, licensed, as he is provided with a book which he must produce whenever he wants opium. Not only so, but his supply must not exceed in value more than a certain percentage of his wages, and in any case the quantity must not exceed a fixed limit.

Were this theory effectively carried out, the opium traffic would die out in the course of a generation. It certainly has been reduced, as is evidenced by the

lower value of the shop licences. There are, however, open doors.

For instance, an employer can certify that he has so many men working for him who are opium consumers, and he is provided with opium to meet their needs. I discovered that the traders in the Archipelago made false statements as to the number of employés, and thereby secured supplies far in excess of their actual requirements. One man encountered had three balls of opium, each ball weighing eighty tolas. Another man had two balls of the same weight. Some of the opium is illicitly made, and it is very difficult to find "factories" secreted in the jungle. Upon reporting to the Acting Superintendent of Excise at Mergui (an energetic represser of the traffic, who refused bribes: a Eurasian, named Dover), he recommended me to carry the matter to the Commissioner of Tenasserim, Mr W. Dawson. The Commissoner, when next he visited Mergui, made careful inquiries. He called upon some of the traders to produce their men, which they were unable to do in the numbers they had certified; and, ascertaining the true state of affairs, he issued regulations requiring that the men should in all cases be produced and their thumb-prints taken. While this gives the trader much more trouble, it does not prevent collusion and fraud.

There was, and is, another open door. Not all the peoples of Burma are placed on the protected list. Those not on the list are not registered and can secure

supplies from the traders and others without the production of a book. The Mawken are not on the protected list, and my effort to have them placed on the list was unavailing.

While, therefore, we are shutting down the opium trade in some directions, we are allowing for the opening up in other directions. As Burma abuts on China, it is scarcely a matter for surprise that some Chinese governors of provinces are ordering the growing of poppies in their provinces. If doors are left open, and since there is money in this traffic, "why should not we produce opium and secure the whole of the profits ourselves?" When it comes to business, the Chinaman is no fool.

In dealing with the opium question as it affects—and very seriously affects—the Mawken, I may, as a matter of information, state a few general facts, as so many people are heard to assert that "opium does no harm." We are told, in like manner, that alcohol as a beverage does no harm—yet one of the first questions an insurance agent puts is: "Are you a total abstainer?" And men in training, when they want to be thoroughly fit in wind and limb, have to knock off "drinks and smokes." It would seem to be evident that while these things—opium included—are useful and desirable as medicines, they are, although not perceptibly so to the unscientific observer, harmful as dopes. We leave others to argue these questions.

Very shortly after my arrival in Burma, while stay-

ing at Government House, Rangoon, I had the good fortune to meet Sir Richard Dane, who was Chairman of the Opium Commission. We had a long talk about the traffic in India, and he informed me that while he imputed no dishonest motives whatever to missionaries, the Commission had found that the missionaries in some cases were rather careless. They had produced emaciated men and women who were addicted to the dope as evidence of the harmful effects of opium. Opium was not necessarily the cause of this emaciation, as many consumers are decidedly plump.

If any habit enslaves the habitué we acknowledge that it is bad for the slave. Opium is an insidious drug, and the craving grows. Lethargy is induced, and the disinclination for effort increases. The habitué may actually grow stouter, through laziness, and appear to be in better health than before. In the case of the Mawken, the habit ties him to the supplier, who, as we have seen, defrauds him of his just earnings.

Knowledge takes unfair advantage of Ignorance, and refrains from enlightening it; Wit enslaves Muscle; and the Mawken, though he has Capacity, at present lacks the Wit.

We now return to Nbai's refusal to go to Maulmein unless he were supplied with opium, and to my refusal to give it to him.

I was determined, however, not to be beaten. So I went to the G.M.O. and inquired what course he

adopted when he had as prisoners men who were addicted to the dope. He explained that in the case of a man who took small quantities the supply was knocked off at once. The man then suffered the effects of opium-poisoning and became almost demented, as the unsatisfied craving was so intense. In the course of a few days he recovered, and, not being able to get it, he had to go without it. In the case of a man who partook of large quantities, death would probably ensue were the drug withheld at once, so the custom was to administer opium in gradually reduced quantities, until no opium whatever was given.

In Lincolnshire, years ago, a doctor told me that he had cured a morphia patient in a similar manner. Discovering the cause of the trouble, he stipulated that he should inject the morphia himself if he were to continue his attendances. He made the solution weaker and weaker, until at length he injected *aqua distillata* only! When the patient had recovered normal health he told him of the course he had adopted, and bore the furious outburst upon his "deception."

Again I saw Nbai. He was reminded how the opium habit kept him in a state of poverty, as he received so little return for his labour. He admitted the truth of this. He was reminded that the drug resulted in lassitude and general and increasing dislike for work, thereby preventing his working as much as he would, and causing him more poverty and misery. He admitted that also; but he said he could not give

it up, for he would die if he tried to do so. He acknowledged that opium made him feel out of sorts, and that his condition, physically, grew worse with time.

By this time I had learned that while the Mawken do not believe in a Supreme Being, nor do they seek to worship him, they do acknowledge the existence of such a Being. Their name for him is Thida, which, I am told, is adopted from the Siamese, though the Siamese as a nation are Buddhists.

I assured Nbai that he owed all his powers of body and soul to Thida. I told him that Thida desired that he should use these powers in the best possible way. And while I carefully refrained from picturing Thida as an irate and arbitrary monster, I ventured to go so far as to insist that while he was a slave to opium he was not using these powers in the best way, and that this was not pleasing to Thida. It was explained to him how he could, by gradually reducing the doses, abandon the habit, and he was asked if he would definitely try this plan. I spoke with the conviction I felt, and Nbai was visibly impressed. After a few moments' silence he said he would try. And I agreed to provide him with the money to procure his supplies at Maulmein, because I regarded it as "releasing a man from evil, by stages."

CHAPTER X

LIFE AT MAULMEIN

SO it came about that when the next "B.I." boat sailed for Maulmein passages were taken for the three Mawken. The fire-ship, as they called it, was a wonder-ship to them, and the deck passages I had secured, to avoid expense, provided luxuries unknown in their *kabang*. There were many things on board for which they had no names, and had my ignorance of their language not placed me in the position of a "barbarian" to them, it would have been interesting to listen to their talk about such things. The boat was called a fire-ship because they had understood that without fire it could not move.

On these coasting trips several new words were coined by the Mawken, one of which I recollect as resulting from a cargo of sheep we were carrying. Anyone who has disturbed a goat knows that as it frisks away it utters the sound "*Pĕ!*" The Mawken name for goat, like our name for wolf, is onomatopœic. A goat to them is *pĕ*. The Mawken with me had not previously seen sheep, and they had no name for sheep. I cannot but realise that at that time any talk about sheep, shepherds and the Beautiful Shepherd would have been wholly unintelligible to them.

Nbai and the boys, upon the occasion to which I refer, watched the sheep intently, talked of them as *pĕ*, while commenting upon their curly hair, unlike the straight hair of the goat, and noted other differences. Then one of the sheep uttered a plaintive "*Ba-a-a-ah.*" They all laughed heartily. Nbai repeated the sound. Later, when I had acquired a considerable knowledge of the language, I pointed to some sheep and asked what was the Mawken name for them. The answer, given without any hesitation, was "*Ba.*" And *ba* entered the Mawken language as the name for sheep.

During the first run to Maulmein with the Mawken on board my mind was exercised afresh on the subject of clothing. It was my desire not to Europeanise them in dress, customs, nor speech. I wished to present new ideas and new knowledge for them to assimilate, and to leave them free to evolve on their own initiative.

The Burmese wear *lungyis*, which are skirt-like nether garments. By tucking them up cleverly boys and men manage to do whatever they desire without hindrance. The Mawken of the Mergui district are in contact with the Burmese. Should the Mawken adopt Burmese dress? The Malay men and boys wear trousers, which are useful for a sea-roving people. The Burmese, on the contrary, as a people dislike the sea. In the Victoria Point district the Mawken are in contact with the Malays, and, like the Malays, they are a sea-roving people.

When we reached Maulmein, I sent for a *dirzi*, or

Indian tailor, and got him to measure the three Mawken for shorts, to be made of navy blue duck, fitted at the waist with loops for a belt. Shorts would be even more convenient for the Mawken life than trousers. Wishing to avoid the fuss of coats, I asked the *dirzi* to make white shirts with the loose, cuffless sleeves and the shaped, collarless neck of the Burmese *aingyi*, or jacket. This made a garment with the exterior finish of a Burmese coat, while avoiding the necessity for shirt and coat. A change of garment was to be provided, so that the clothes might be washed without the necessity for the Mawken to remain in bed on washing day. When in the course of a couple of days the *dirzi* brought the neatly made garments, the Mawken donned them with great pleasure. The blue shorts and white shirt-jacket on their rich brown skin produced a picturesque effect. Shoes and sandals were not introduced then, nor at any subsequent time.

To have left the Mawken in the dirty rags in which they had come up with me would have been out of the question, as they were to be friends, living with me, and having the free run of my house at all times. They were not to be hewers of wood and drawers of water in my establishment.

Small mirrors, brushes and combs, and tooth-brushes, soap, towels and basin were also provided; thus they began their new life with supplies which they could not have earned during twelve moons in the Archipelago,

in addition to earning their food. Each had brought his own sleeping-mat, and these were spread at night in the verandah, and rolled up and put away in the morning.

Nbai was provided also with a *dah*. This is a heavy knife which instead of tapering to the point from the handle broadens out and is cut off at the broadest part. It is used in Burma for splitting coco-nuts, chopping wood or cracking skulls.

In the early days of the Burma railway passengers were warned not to hang their hands out of the carriage windows. Incidents had occurred of passengers hanging out their hands, on which rings were worn, and as the train moved out of a station, leaving the usual crowd of sightseers behind, a *dah* would flash, and such passengers would depart minus hand and rings. I do not imply that this was a frequent occurrence; but it was a *possible* one.

When the Mawken had been with me for some weeks Koshan appeared one morning with a gash on his head. It was plain, too, that he had been crying. I inquired of Nbai as to the cause, and he replied, with a laugh: "*Mlăn!*"—suiting the action to the word, in dumb show—"*Chi!*" (*Mlăn* means "to strike," and *chi* means "I.") He had been correcting Koshan, who had done something to arouse his displeasure, with the *dah*! And it seemed to him to be something decidedly humorous. He was given to understand that it was not the kind of thing we regarded as a joke, and that it was not to be repeated.

The Mawken soon became notorieties, in no unpleasant sense, in Maulmein. People in the station, as towns and villages in which Europeans are "stationed" are called, became much interested in them.

As chaplain I frequently "dined out," and upon occasion officials and others "dined in" with me. I look back with pleasure and gratification to these little parties, when I recollect how absolutely free from snobbishness was the attitude adopted by those who honoured me with their presence. I refer, of course, to their attitude towards the Mawken.

The little parsonage which I had had built (previously the chaplain had no fixed abode) was provided with an open balcony, and after dinner we would sit out there in the glorious moonlight or starlight, and the Mawken would join us. By that time my knowledge of their language was sufficient to allow of triangular conversations, and those who were interested were able to obtain some information from the Mawken at these gatherings *en famille*. We discovered that they have an astronomy (on the geocentric theory, of course), a botany and an extensive conchology. I found no trace of astrology. This is not to be taken as a definite assertion that none exists amongst the Mawken.

While the Mawken who live in their ships and do not visit the ports do all their business by barter, those Mawken who mix with Burmese, Chinese and

Malays have learned to use coinage and to trade on a basis of weights and measures. Nbai possessed such a knowledge, and as he had a colloquial vocabulary of Burmese he was able to look after himself very well.

Like the Burmese, the Mawken eat with Adam's forks! Readers of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* will recollect that such were the forks used by our forefathers in the times of the Tudors. Our present use of knives, forks and spoons, not for serving, but for eating, is modern. It is well to bear this in mind when one travels, as we should not describe our kings and nobles of the sixteenth century as "savages" because they had not our modern customs at the table. No doubt we should find them rather uncomfortable table companions, however, in these days! And because the Mawken had not advanced from our sixteenth-century table customs—having no table, and no table manners at all—they preferred to take their meals apart, in picnic fashion. Also they did not desire my fancy dishes, preferring plainer fare in liberal helpings. I found it worked well to make them a daily allowance to procure their own food, which they cooked in my kitchen. This meant a daily visit with my "boy" to the bazaar.

The following are the Mawken names for the coinage used in Burma, which is, of course, the coinage of the Indian Empire, other than the "Native States," as we call them:—

ahong=one pice (farthing)
tbeĕ=one anna (penny)
achŏk=two annas
apin=four annas
twa pin=eight annas (two four-annas)
acha=one rupee (one and fourpence)

Nbai knew the Burmese names for the coins.

Long measure was a very simple thing, without, however any standard fixed:

knup=a finger-joint
chgam=a span
ahat=a fore-arm
adapa=the stretch of both arms

The numbers are prefixed, so that *pat hat* would be four fore-arms, *twa dapa* would be two both-arms-outstretched.

It looks uncommonly as if the unusually small man with short finger-joints, short span and short arm-stretch would have an advantage over his bigger brother, unless he suffered from being boycotted altogether! In dealings with Burmese and others, *their* measures would prevail, to the exclusion of the Mawken ones.

Mawken barter did not take account of weights; and weights seem to be unknown to the Mawken who flit amongst the distant islands. Number and size of such things as fish and shells would be considered. Amongst themselves they had, as they still have, a

rough-and-ready system of barter, for which no standard weights and measures were required. In recent years, since some of them have lost their fear, and especially since force of circumstances, such as the loss to the Filipinos of the greater part of the pearl diving, they have in larger number become habituated to visiting the southern ports; have traded with the Burmese, Chinese and Malays; and have found it necessary to procure rice and other supplies sold in the bazaars according to standards prevailing there. This has led to the coining, or adoption, of new words for the weights and measures they have found in use. So a *bicha* indicates a hundred *ticals*, or a *viss*; *bicha aking* describes fifty *ticals*, or half a *viss*; a *pawt* is one *tical*, or a hundredth part of a *bicha*.

It is of interest to note that in this case they start with the highest measure as a standard and cut it up into its parts.

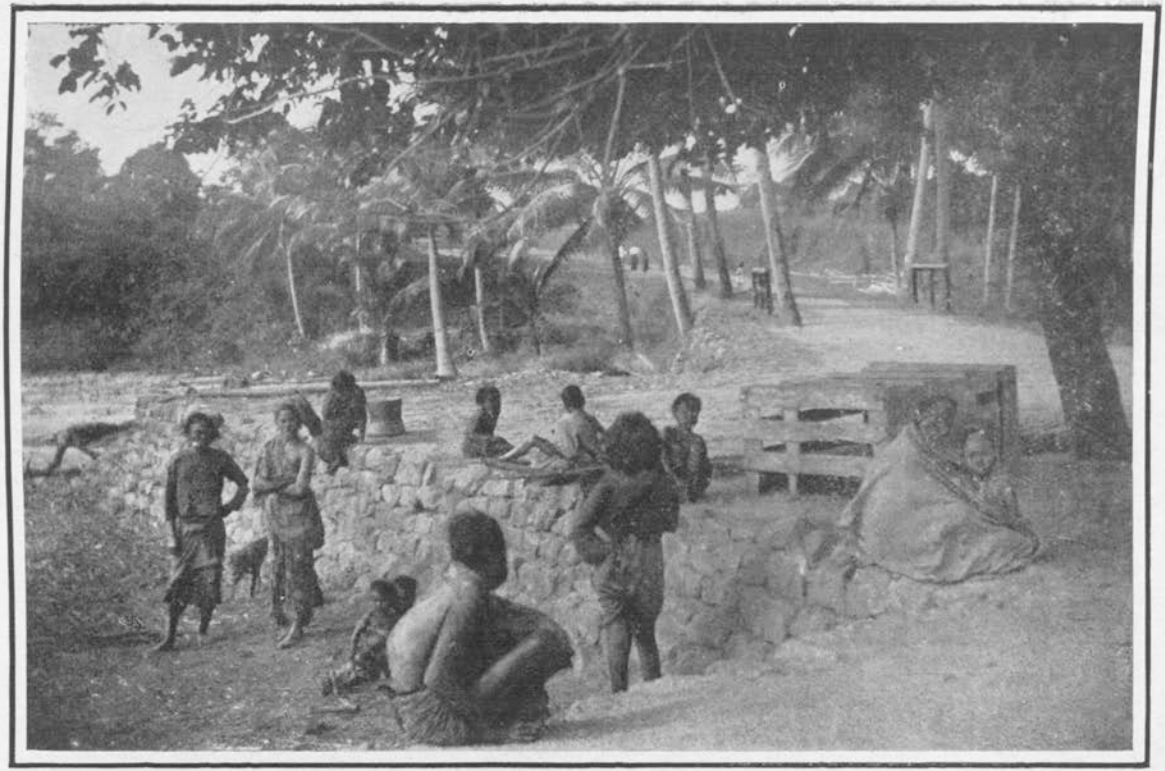
Upon many occasions, under various conditions, the truth was borne in upon me that the Mawken, who would be classed in Britain as "uncivilised savages," are inferiors only because they have not been called upon to develop their powers. In latent powers they are not inferiors, and they have great capacity. If we will lend the helping hand, they will rise when these powers are educated—*i.e.* "brought up."

So frequently in England education is confused with instruction; and the very word "educate" is taken to

connote "drawing out" instead of "bringing up."[1] With a wrong idea at the back of our minds it is unavoidable that our methods should be "queered." It is very difficult (at least it was so to me) to take the right line, in every circumstance, so as to lead and not to draw or to drive, to cultivate self-discipline instead of imposing discipline, to exercise the deputed authority conferred by a knowledge of Truth and Right, instead of being merely autocratic, according to one's own arbitrary likings and rulings. If one can always reverence personality, wherever it exists, even in a little child, one will avoid many serious mistakes in dealing with that which has, as we believe, *eternal* potentialities.

When the parsonage was built, and we moved down from St Augustine's Mission House, which had afforded my predecessor and myself shelter for years, it was found that all the bricks supplied for the bases to the posts which supported the house were not used up. A stack of them remained in the compound. Nbai observed this. He also observed that during the heavy rains water collected in some depressions in the newly made-up ground surrounding the house. Also he had noticed that in the public roads the water was drained off by means of leading channels and ditches. So without a word to me he marked the places where the water collected, and when the rain cleared he traced and dug out a system of drains, which he bricked in, and so put an end to standing

[1] *E-ducare* = to bring up; *e-ducere* = to lead out.



VICTORIA POINT.

Showing a stone jetty, coco-nut palms, and a road of red laterite leading uphill to the station. The people are Mawken.

water about the grounds. Had he known that he was depriving the *anopheles* (malaria-bearing mosquito) of breeding-places, he would have realised that he was doing a better work than he had planned.

He took a great interest and a real pleasure in the garden, and I devoted a part of the compound to the cultivation of vegetables, such as ochroes and pumpkins, sorrel and maize. He was shown how to take cuttings of plants, how to do layering, and how to transplant, taking care to water the hole and to spread the roots well in it. He learned also about manuring and mulching, and—a great joy to me!—he learned that there were other ways of watering garden plants than that of the ordinary Indian *mali*—namely, pitching water at them from a bucket. Understanding that the *stomata* of leaves should be washed free of dust that they may breathe freely, and that plants should be watered according to the growth of their roots, he "did as he was told," and had not the inevitable reply of people of East and West who have dropped into certain habits, without thought or knowledge: "It is our *custom*." What a stone wall is painted to one's mental vision when the clinching objection to other ways and other thoughts is propounded in the word—CUSTOM!

It should be plain by this time that the philosophy of my dealings with the Mawken can be summed up in the expressions "Brother" and "Friend." There was a real desire to exercise a sympathetic understanding and

to detect latent powers which might be laid out. This resulted in a relationship which was frank and pleasant, and wholly delightful. There was never the slightest indication of unseemliness, and such a thing as "bounce" was alien to it. There cannot be bounce when there is no suppression or knocking down.

Another thing which should be mentioned is this: Nbai showed the nice feeling of Nature's Gentleman. It happened that I became engaged before leaving Burma. Even before the matter was explained to Nbai he knew by a nice instinct when his room was preferred to his company, made himself scarce, and took the boys with him. Even when there was no need for it he would withdraw himself, as he always did when anyone came in for a special talk.

I refrained from teaching him English, so he could not have followed our conversations. I preferred that he should receive the interference of new ideas (new motive powers) through the medium of his own language, which he would understand; and I wanted particularly to avoid being misled as to his assimilation of such ideas by his aptness to learn by rote, and to repeat statements and answers to questions in a language foreign to him (English).

Much of that which follows, as well as much of that which has preceded, this chapter was gleaned during the time that the Mawken shared my home life at Maulmein.

Whether or not he reverted to the dope after he

found that I was not returning to help him and his people, I cannot testify. It was gratifying to find that within a few weeks of coming to Maulmein he was able to tell me one morning:

"I do not want any more opium money. I have given it up."

And he avoided opium during the years that we companied together.

CHAPTER XI

COMMITTING MAWKEN TO WRITING: THOUGHT-SYMBOLS & A SCRIPT

THE chief objects aimed at in having the Mawken with me at Maulmein, since I could not go and live amongst them, were that they might teach me their language and that, in return, they might receive new thoughts from me.

They had no writing and consequently no literature. The knowledge of Burmese writing said to have been imparted to the Mawken who were called to the Court of the King at Ava died with those who had acquired it.

After committing the language to writing myself, I learned that a previous effort had been made by a Mr Stevens, an American Baptist missionary, in the forties of the nineteenth century. The script which he invented was copied by Dr D. L. Brayton, who was in Mergui in 1844. He also was a Baptist missionary. In 1846 a *Primer of the Selong Language* was published at the American Baptist Mission Press, which was then in Maulmein. The edition, I am told, numbered two hundred, of which I have been able to trace only one copy. This was procured for my inspection through the kind offices of the Reverend W.

Bushell, Baptist missionary to the Karens at Dinewunquin, Maulmein. It is a brochure containing reading lessons. In the introductory notes it is explained that:

(1) Two consonants coming together, unless a vowel *precedes*, are separated by a vowel sound.

(2) Two final consonants are pronounced with one articulation of the voice.

Amongst the illustrations, which are not in colour, are: a fish, a cat, a tree, a dog, paddy, a flower, a pine-apple, a fowl, a tiger, an elephant, a steamer, a house, a rat, a clock, an umbrella (!!), "John Bull," a bird with a twig, fruit, a cow, a peacock, a train, books, orchard and apple-gatherers (!!), French dog-carrier, dog drawing a cart, and "The Crucifixion" (one cross).

This list is of peculiar interest to educationalists if it be studied. The ideas presented to the Mawken—whose true name was not known, as the title of the book proclaims—and their educational values show a true conception of the necessity of points of contact, with some amusing attempts to widen the outlook; unless they be but lapses into the native prejudices of the would-be teacher.

At the end of the book are addition and multiplication tables.

It is said that a school was opened and that some were taught to write and to read. Not a single Mawken to-day knows anything about it; none of the hundreds I met, nor any known to them.

Even had I known of this previous attempt when I took up the work, I should not have adopted the script invented by Mr Stevens, as it was unnecessarily complicated, and rendered future work by Europeans difficult. Mr Stevens adopted the Pwo Karen characters, with certain additional signs. Part of his work lay amongst the Pwo Karens, and it was this fact, without doubt, that influenced his choice of a script. His system comprised consonants, vowels and contractions. There were twenty-two consonants. The Roman letters G, B, N, S were employed as consonants; and N and S with ₀ subscriptum were compounds, together with G and B with iota subscriptum: N_o, S_o, G_i, B_i. The alphabet, being a new thing, required learning by any European who would take up the work. A great variety of pronunciations was noticed; but, even with this combination of characters, all the sounds could not be represented.

In China great progress is reported in the study of the language now that the *sounds* are recorded by use of the Roman characters, with a few adapted combinations of Roman letters. Chinese writing did not attempt to record sounds; it represented objects and ideas.

The easiest method of writing is the strictly phonetic one; and but for prejudice the English language might be written phonetically and thus save a vast amount of time and effort. Our spelling represents words as they used to be sounded, not as they are pronounced to-day.

At first it seemed that the signs used in Pitman's sound-writing might be called into service. So far as the representation of all the sounds goes, it would answer admirably. A big BUT stood in the way. Would it be easy to make the Mawken understand the halving, doubling and contracting principles, also the hooks, hidden loops and circles? And would it be a congenial task for future missionaries or Government officials to be compelled to master Pitman's phonography before they could get at Mawken? True, it would not be worse than learning the Burmese script, in which the more signs one adds the less sound one gets!

Then the Reverend Mr Whitehead's system, arranged by him for the Chins, was inspected. That would have made my work unduly complicated.

It was *The English Pronouncing Dictionary* which decided me. By using the *diæresis*, the *macron* and the *breve*, and by accepting the unscientific double consonants *ch*, *th*, *ng*, *ny*, *sh*, a script could be secured which would represent all the sounds in Mawken phonology. Nasal twangs—not a necessary part of the language at all—were left for those to acquire who cared to do so.

It is well known that the English alphabet is unscientific and inadequate, since it professes not to commit *ideas* to paper (as in Chinese), but to commit *sounds* to writing. It contains five so-called vowels, three of which are really diphthongs. Language the

world over is based upon six sounds (or pure vowels) and their modifications. These six vowel sounds are shown in Pitman's phonography. There are diphthongs, dissyllabic diphthongs and the triphthong in the word *wife*.

Continental spelling, although more scientific than English, is not truly scientific. In French, for instance, we have such atrocities as *cette*!

The letters C, Q, X are not required at all. Soft *c* is already represented by *s* and hard *c* by *k*. What a pity it is that we did not take *c* from the Italians and make it represent the sound we now write (absurdly unscientifically) as *ch*. We find this in the musical term "concerto" (con-cherto).

But the ordinary reader will not want to go into further details.

He may like to be reminded, however, that writing may consist of symbols to represent *ideas*, as in Egyptian hieroglyphics; it may consist of letters which shall be combined to spell out *sounds*, or it may be made up of signs which shall each represent a *syllable*. The last is a syllabary, not an alphabet. And this most wonderful invention of a syllabary is due, we remind ourselves, to Sequoia, the Chief of the Chiroki Indians, of North America, after whom the gigantic sequoia-trees are named. Those who have followed in his steps in committing other North American Indian languages to writing are sometimes named as if they were the originators of the idea of a syllabary. Honour to

whom honour is due—and the honour is due to the wonderful Sequoia, the Indian Chief.

We have become accustomed, from Hebrew writings, to associate various passions with various parts of the body, such as the high stomach of pride and the bowels of mercy; and it is not surprising, when scientists have dissected the brain and the spinal cord in their search for the seat of the spirit of Man, to find that the Mawken locate anger in the stomach! When we recollect the semi-humorous saying about feeding a man well to keep him in a good temper, we see how fitting is the Mawken's localisation of ill temper. There is no room in the stomach for such a funny contradiction in terms—and realities—as "righteous wrath."

In committing a language to writing one needs to recollect that words may crystallise history and poetry. And because of this one must be very much on the alert to catch the sounds correctly, and accurately to represent them in the script one has adopted. The English have been remarkably careless in the matter of languages. The symbolism of words seems to have been largely overlooked. Religious and political differences are for the most part due to the attaching of different thought-values to the same symbols (words); and pronunciation has been, and is, so careless that the most painstaking student will find that unwittingly he has become accustomed to a lapse himself. Public *reading* is scarcely regarded as a pleasurable art to-day.

The Mawken language contains many words which begin with a consonant-sound (minus a vowel), such as *m'* or *p'*, followed by a syllable composed of the coalescing of consonant-sound and vowel. We find such words as *mpawt*, *mlŏk*, *mkŏp*. Other words have the consonant-sound distinct from the syllable which begins with a vowel. This gives such words as *m'op*, *m'am*.

One of the most difficult words to record was that for love. It contains a diphthong unknown in the English language, and it was a long time before I could get the sound broken up into its component parts. As in this chapter I have abandoned the macron and have allowed our vowel-signs to represent the Continental vowel-sounds, unless shortened by the imposition of a breve, the Mawken word for love must be written *leak*. For the benefit of any who have not dipped into phonetics, it should be explained that the *e* is pronounced as aye, and the *a* is pronounced as ah. So the word might be written *lay-ah-k*. The two vowels must be sounded with a single articulation; and anyone who tries this will recognise how difficult it was to catch the sound when one had had no previous experience of such a diphthong.

Anyone who in these days commits a scriptless language to writing knows full well that he is but one amongst a crowd through the ages; yet his is the special joy and satisfaction of the experience of a pioneer. He knows that he is opening doors to a palace of exhaustless wonders; and while he is not

puffed up, he may have a just pride in his achievement. He cannot deceive himself into thinking that the work is finished once for all; and he knows from his many pitfalls encountered and avoided during his task that some things must have escaped his notice. The true pronunciation of a word or of a syllable may not have been correctly apprehended, with the inevitable result that such word or such syllable has not been correctly committed to writing. The mistake may cause serious trouble to someone trusting implicitly in the work of the pioneer. Or it may be that the meaning of a word has not been correctly distinguished, and as a result some religious heresy will arise. Such an instance has been known in Burma, and was in existence during my sojourn there.

When Mawken-English and English-Mawken dictionaries were well on the way (I was careful to do the double work as I proceeded) it became possible to begin to teach Nbai and the boys to put pencil to paper. I practised them first with straight strokes and found that the strokes were not straight; some practice was needed to get a stroke which was straight. Next they tried their hands at circles and segments of circles, and then we went right away to letters. I did not arrange the letters in the form of an alphabet, and I took no trouble to teach them the alphabet. That would have been an uninteresting waste of time. They made a close acquaintance with the members of the alphabet before they made even a partial attempt to list them in

a special order. Any such order, being arbitrary, requires the exercise of mere memory, and this is deadening to the spirit which seeks knowledge when it begins to sally forth in search of it.

We had no school; no set hours were fixed, and we worked when we found convenient opportunities. Usually I would set them some copying to do while I attended to my correspondence in the morning; and they would spread themselves about the floor and write lying down. I have often seen Burmans in their houses writing while lying full length on the floor. Reading lessons of short duration would take place in the afternoon just before I went forth upon my visits, or in the evening after my return from the gymkhana. (I hope it is not necessary to explain gymkhana.) When they were fresh and keen the lessons would be longer than when they were inclined to be listless, as would sometimes occur on an exceptionally close day. And it is of interest to be able to record that while external discipline in this work was so lacking, self-discipline imposed by the interest of the task and the keen desire to be able to write and to read effected wonders. It was not many months ere Nbai could leave chits on my writing-desk informing me of his little needs. He was highly delighted with himself when he had attained this proficiency in the new art.

CHAPTER XII

NOTIONS, NEW & OLD

ALL peoples have thought of the "beginning" of things. Some, like the Buddhists, postulate a single law or process. Others, like the Sumerians and Akkadians, have conceived of various powers. Genesis, though combining folk-lore representing two conflicting conceptions, has been welded to present a single creator and an original pair placed in a park in the plain. (Eden is a geographical term meaning "plain." Paradise is from the Persian, and means a park-like region. The word is used in Genesis and in the utterance from the Cross.) A late Makuchi Indian (South America) conception supposes a creator and a batch of human beings. And the questions Whence came we? and Whither do we go? have interested most thinkers.

Mr Carrapiett gives an astounding account which professes to be the Mawken's idea of the origin of things! My own opinion is that in more senses than one he was listening to a fairy-tale! But it must, I suppose, be mentioned.

At first there was only one woman; there is no account of how she came to be. She was unhappy because she was alone. Thida saw her sorrow and bade her bend down and turn to the west, when he

caused conception from the east; the result was the birth of a girl. Then the woman was told to bend to the east, and there was conception from the west; of this a boy was born. Then from the north and south a male and a female child were born. When the children grew up the girls were allowed to play with a python. One of the girls reported to her mother that the creature pushed her about, and the mother said she was not to mind that. One day python and girl were missing. After a search the python was found in the roof of the house, and upon being cut open the body of the girl was found inside. The other daughter was married to an orang-outang. A child was born, and mother and child were taken to the top of a htein-tree. The orang-outang searched for honey and brought it in leaves to his wife. This diet being insufficient, the girl wanted to return home, and she complained of being dull, and got the orang-outang to bring her some shaw fibre to spin. Of this she made a rope and let herself down and ran home when her husband was on an outing. The orang-outang followed her, but was delayed by a swollen stream. At last he reached the house and angrily claimed his wife. He was persuaded to live there as the honey was not enough for her needs. Then the mother said that he could share the house, and the father (who appears from nowhere, be it noted) suggested that the husband should work with him in the smithy, taking care to keep his eyes shut and his mouth open. One day the

father pushed a red-hot shovel down the husband's throat and killed him. The widow next married an alligator, which ate her up, but her child lived and was married to a tiger. They had children and lived happily. The original lads of the first lone woman married female animals and had children. And so the world was peopled.

I give this story in epitome, because it was accepted in good faith. As it was obtained through an interpreter, we may apportion some blame to him! Some physiological reasons for giving it should be obvious.

The very simple account given to me when I had made headway in the language was this:

"Thida made everything."

Thida is said to be the Siamese name for God, although the Siamese, as Buddhists, would not to-day acknowledge our concepts of a God.

The Mawken have the idea that Thida is the good spirit, and that being good he will not hurt them. Therefore he can be ignored. Ideas of seeking communion with Thida, or of worshipping Thida, are lacking. There are evil influences which must be avoided, or propitiated.

It would be wrong to speak of the Mawken as spirit-worshippers. I doubt if there are any such people in the world! Spirit-propitiators, yes! Worship includes love and adoration. Perhaps it may be allowable to class the Mawken as animists, though this will depend upon the thought-value of this term.

In the highest sense, the Mawken cannot be said to have Religion. This is a statement which needs explanation, and I can make myself clear by giving a homely illustration:

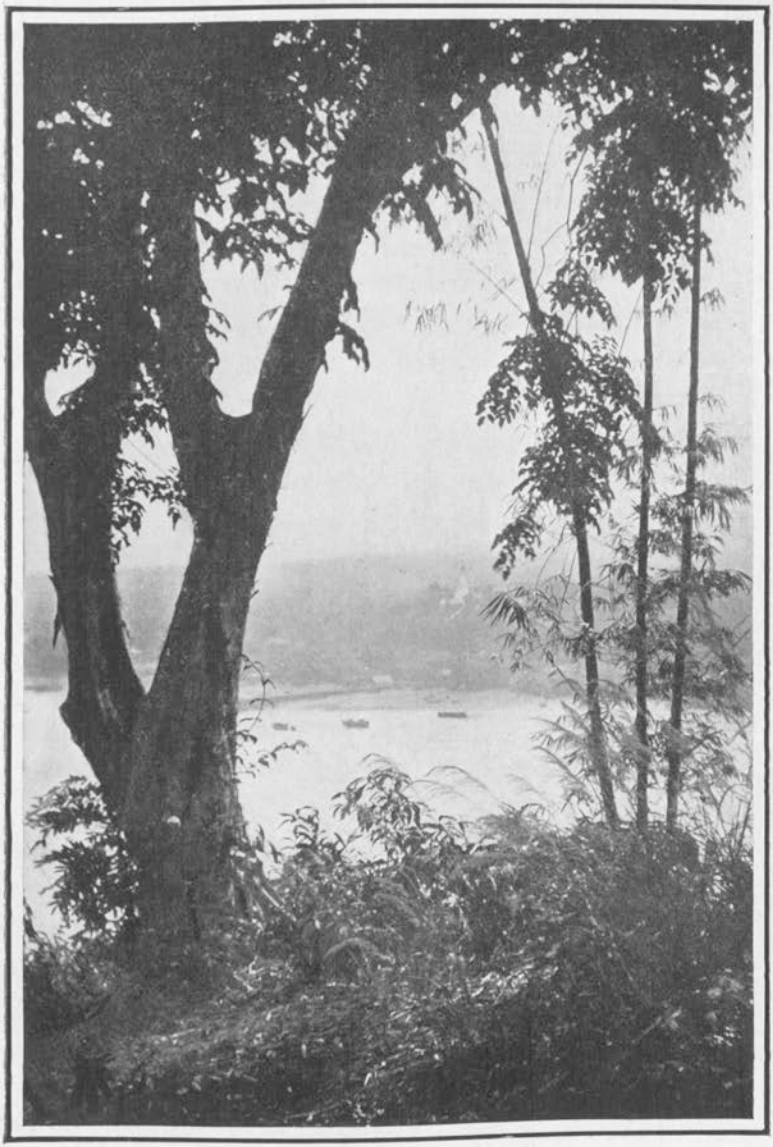
My little boy may be sent to school, where he is taught to write and to read; is taught French, German, Italian and Chinese; is taught to be courteous, truthful, honest and clean; is taught music and singing; and is trained in games. He may be said to have a good education, or to receive good instruction. He is good and clever.

But if he has no idea that he owes all these things to me, his father (though I do not give him his bread and butter, nor do I teach him French and cricket), he will be unaware of any relationship.

Supposing he receives the notion that there is someone, called "Daddy," far away, who provides these things; but this Daddy is good and will not hurt him, therefore there is no need to worry about him (though the bullies of the school must be carefully avoided, or propitiated).

Or supposing that he came to the house which should be home, and still had the idea (while enjoying all that is provided) that Daddy is good and will not hurt, and that he may therefore be ignored.

What is lacking? It is the whole meaning of Life. My outpoured love for my child yearns for his knowledge of that love, and for his love in return. While there are many rules of Life, the relationship is unrealised.



A Distant View of Mergui

As seen across the water from Palaw Island.

And Religion, in its reality, is a relationship. The rules (systems) may vary, but the relationship must be realised, and all that is good in all the rules (systems) must be comprised and summed up in the relationship.

The Mawken have morals, or inherited customs of life. They have a conscience, enlightened by, and in turn enforcing, these customs. They have physical and mental powers. They are (more or less) good, and they are (more or less) clever.

There it ends. The rest is a feeling and an unexplained yearning. They would be "in tune with the Infinite" if they knew how.

It would be a great mistake to present to them the idea that differing religious systems are conflicting Religions, instead of leading them to see that each system holds some vision of Truth, that the Truth in all must be conserved and united, and that all must be consummated in the realisation of a relationship of Fatherhood and Sonship.

While dealing with Notions, it is important that any idea of the fatherhood of Thida should be simply that of relationship, purely spiritual, and free entirely from any mind picture of the male sex. The Mawken language allows of speech about Thida without the sex label of our pronouns of masculine gender—he and him. This is important to notice when the influence of Buddhism is taken into account, for the Buddhist mind naturally dissociates sex ideas from personality or the profluence of life called *karma*.

In learning the Mawken language, and in seeking to impart new notions, it was natural that I should wish to help to a realisation of our relationship with the infinite, and to teach them how to seek communion. It took me two years to find the word for "our."

I worked upon my fingers and illustrated my need: "There were three sons. This one said: 'He is my father.' This one said: 'He is my father.' And this one said: 'He is my father.' They all three said: 'He is. . .'?"—expecting the answer "He is *our* father." No! the answer came: "He said, 'They are all my sons!'"

Anyone who has had experience in teaching children knows how, when the child fails to see the point, further questioning may make the child more stupid than ever on that particular question. So I left it alone for a time. Something psychological must have gone very wrong, however, for even after intervals of varying length the same inability was encountered. In other respects the Mawken were bright and intelligent, and Nbai would often sense my meaning and help me out.

The Mawken roamed my house as friends, and one morning when I was at breakfast they passed through the room, and I overheard Nbai say to the boys in Mawken: "Come, let us have . . . food." I stopped him and asked him to repeat his words, and then I found that he had said "our food." *Kamo-i* was the word I had been seeking for two years! So the prayer

could be taught, and the new notion could be expressed.

The Notion of Holiness was another one I desired to impart. There was no word for "holy" in the Mawken language. To transplant the word "holy" would have been unavailing; it would have been a sound learned and repeated, and used in proper contexts. What of its thought-value to the Mawken? New notions should be clothed in their language, and that language must be evolved to express new ideas.

It may be of some interest if I show how the new idea came to be expressed. The example is simple, almost crude, and can easily be followed even by those who have not learned Mawken.

There is in Mawken a word for "separate." "Holy" comes from a root in the Hebrew meaning "separate" (separate from all that is not truth, beauty and love). So I asked the Mawken if they could think of Thida as separate in such a sense. They admitted that they had never so thought of Thida but that they could do so, and their word for "separate" (*ăchĭng*) could be used of Thida. It would express a new thought.

We associate "purity" with the word "holy." And in Mawken there is a word used to describe a pure sky, without a fleck of cloud, or pure water. This word is *j'ngĕ*. Upon further questioning I learned that this word, like *ăchĭng*, had never been used of Thida, but that it could be used and would be sensible.

Then I said that I wanted a new word, in which both thoughts were rolled into the one word—separateness and purity—and I suggested the new word, made by the simple process of coalescing *ăchĭng* and *ƒ'ngĕ*, *ƒ'ngăchĭng*. This was accepted eagerly. I asked them to apply the new thought to Thida, and inquired if the new word gave them a notion of Thida not before entertained. The answer was on their faces, which wreathed in smiles (one may catch oneself smiling at a new perception of truth), and one could almost see them grip a new notion. So the word *ƒ'ngăchĭng* (which the Mawken explained by breaking up the word again) came into use amongst those whom I reached. It is a word which can be passed on with ease.

Upon Dala Island I saw two *katoi ka-e*. Each of these posts was about five feet in height. The tops were fashioned to form a triangle resting upon a long parallelogram (the post), and each was stained with a black stain showing bars, strokes and curves.

These posts marked Dala Island as possessed by a beneficent influence, or spirit, under the protection of whom or which the "kennels" and the small plantation existed. There were no ceremonies connected with these posts, and the Mawken showed no signs of superstitious fear or reverence when passing them. The Mawken told me of others existing elsewhere. No others were seen by me, even when touring the islands on my census-taking.

All the world through there is a belief in spiritual, or unseen, agencies, or influences for good and for evil. The Burmese may describe them as good or bad *nats*, we may speak of them as angels and devils, the Mawken refer to them as *katoi*. The notion is the same, though the explanations may vary.

Similar to Hebrew idiom, the Mawken idiom would be "man of peace" for "peaceable man." "Angel" would be "messenger of spirit" (not to be confused with "a messenger-spirit"). So one given to evil tempers would be "son of wrath." The plural would be, as in Hebrew idiom, "children of wrath." And, likewise, "Son of God" would be equal to "righteous man." The idioms are composed of two nouns, the second of which becomes adjectival. In such instances as boat-house and house-boat, the Mawken would reverse the order of the words, without making the words compounds.

It was easy to extend the meaning of glory from the physical to the spiritual and moral world.

There was no word for the earth as a planet. The Mawken are like the frog in the well; they have no idea of the whole world. They, not unnaturally, conceive of it as flat, and ending with Burma, China, the islands to Pinang and the sea and India. Some of them were taught the shape of the earth, its orbit has been explained and understood, and something of its size has been grasped by references to the days taken (or the moons taken) for a fire-ship to reach

given places. The word for "land" has to do duty for world, as we often use the word "earth."

None of the Mawken could give me the names for the days. I could find no division of weeks, only days and moons and years. The years were roughly marked by the seasons. It will be a new notion to them when they learn about hours, minutes and seconds. Names for Monday, Tuesday, etc., did not trouble me much. What, however, was I to do for Sunday? The Day of the Sun I did not want. There was an expression, *aloi chican*, already in use. As its meaning was not ascertainable, it seemed well to employ a new expression as a temporary expedient. So *Aloi Mping*, Day of Rest, or Sabbath, was adopted, with the explanation that we observe the first of every seven days.

To those who may be interested, I may explain that the Decalogue was not translated in the form we have it. "Explanations" were not confused with "principles." And so we had simply: "Remember the Day of Rest. Keep it holy"; "Honour thy father and thy mother"; "Thou shalt not lie," and so on. It would have been unmeaning to have given "that thy days may be long in the land" to people who live in boats upon the sea.

It did not occur to me to inquire whether the right or the left hand is the place of honour. In Korea it is necessary, in order to get the right notion, to speak about "set at the *left* hand."

Instead of Day of Rest I might have had *Aloi Thida*

(God's Day). That, however, would have produced exactly the same wrong notions about the days of the week with which we are cursed.

In course of time the whole of the Gospel according to St Mark was translated; and the fact should be mentioned that the cost of procuring the special type, with diacritical marks, and printing was defrayed by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Also other little booklets were printed, and an *Introduction to the Mawken Language* was prepared and was published in 1911. The Government took over a number of copies, as a way of helping me to defray the cost.

Of necessity, this work is tentative. We are concerned with notions, which are to be assimilated; rough-and-ready synonyms may do untold harm. Here we are dealing with a people whose language is very simple, a child-language in fact; a people whose mind is virgin soil for new notions; a people still at Life's beginnings, with latent capacity for development in a remarkable degree.

The present streams of influence are the Buddhist and the Mohammedan. What a clash of notions! What sifting and co-ordinating are involved in this clash! The Mawken are slowly being drawn into strange adventures in the realm of notions.

It is very interesting! But is that all?

In a little book upon education, entitled *The Point of Contact*, occurs an account of a preacher in Ceylon who had to make use of a Cingalese interpreter. The

preacher noticed—as many another has noticed when an interpreter is used—that the man said a great deal compared with his own short statements. He observed that the people were very attentive and gave evidence of varying emotions. After the sermon the preacher asked what the interpreter had told the people and why they were so moved. The man explained that to talk about a shepherd going in search of a sheep would have been useless, as the people had not seen sheep and knew nothing about shepherds. Therefore, said he, "I told them about a buffalo which had lost its young one and went all through the jungle in search of it, and at last found it."

Those who translate books into other languages, such as the Mawken, know how careful they must be to make sure that the sense is conveyed. In the chapter on Comparisons there will be found an instance in which not only must this care be taken, but the further precaution of ascertaining whether or not the idiom in the vernacular expresses the true idea. It is sometimes necessary to correct a language!

It would be far too tedious to attempt to give other instances of the expression of notions, new and old, in Mawken, to those who do not happen to have learned the language. Those illustrations of the nature of the work which have been given ought to make it clear that such work entails interesting and even exciting adventures in the realm of thought, and becomes more fascinating the further one explores.

People who exclaim at the difficulty of committing an unwritten language to writing, and regard it as being a wonderful feat to learn a language which has no grammar books, would be pleasantly disillusioned were they seriously to make the attempt themselves.

The one requisite is . . . Sympathy.

CHAPTER XIII

DISCUSSION OF LANGUAGE ORIGIN

THERE is something thought-provoking about the story of the Tower of Babel! I confess I do not know how to take the story myself, for the explanation eludes me.

It does raise the question, however, how it came to be that different people came to produce such different sounds with their mouths to express a name for one and the same thing. Why should we have *water*, the French have *eau*, the Makuchi have *tuna* and the Malays have *ayi*?—and how came it to be that the same sound should express entirely different thoughts (or names), as *pik* = to pick, and *pik* = to pulsate (English and Mawken); *a* = has in French, *a* = ah in English, and *a* = a crow in Mawken? The same *sound* produced by the voice means to different people an entirely different thing. If all languages came from one, it is wonderful. And if they did not, the question *Why?* is still unanswered.

In the course of those years I was able to begin two dictionaries: one was Mawken-English and the other English-Mawken. Probably there are about two thousand words recorded, and whole areas of language are unexplored—areas which I know to exist.

With all the care taken, I am still unable definitely to state the true position of the Mawken language.

In the Census Report, to which previous reference has been made, the following statement is made:—

"It is now generally admitted that Selung is a distinct Malayan language. The Selungs are in fact the northernmost of the *Orung Laut* or sea tribes of the Malay race. The *dialect* is unwritten."

When Dr Anderson submitted a list of Mawken words, obtained through an interpreter, to Dr Ross for expert opinion, the latter replied:

"The Selung is a distinct Malay language, not a dialect of any of the Malay languages. It has a number of characteristic features in morphologia which distinguish it from all its sisters. It has, however, a greater resemblance to the languages of Sumatra than to other Malayan languages" (notice that he says "not a dialect").

Another passage in the Census Report runs:

"Mr Blagden, who, it may be noted, has the advantage of possessing a colloquial knowledge of the Malay dialects, is more cautious. In his opinion Selung and Malay are cognate languages, but Selung has adopted into the language a number of words which are not Malayan."

These conflicting opinions were expressed by men who had not learned the Mawken language itself. They formed their opinions from lists of words, of necessity arbitrarily chosen, obtained through interpreters. Not

one of them could have gone to the people themselves for an explanation of their language. Nor (so it would seem) has any one of them considered the language in connection with the past history of the people, as far as that history can be gleaned from themselves.

We used to accept it as proven that language indicates race, and we have long regarded the people of India as Aryans because we can trace their language to Sanscrit. But archæologists have shown that it is still an open question, since it might, on the same lines, be asserted that the Egyptians were related to the Sumerians and Akkadians because the cuneiform (wedge-shaped) script was used in Egypt. We might similarly assert that the negroes of the West Indies are related to the Saxons and Angles because they speak English and use our script.

The Mawken say that they began to spread through the islands *from the north.* They assert that their first island settlements were on Dung (Elphinstone), which is a large island in the north-west of the Mergui Archipelago. Further, they say that they were *forcibly* scattered southwards by the Malays, who, far from regarding them as a brother tribe, used to carry them off and enslave them. Dr Anderson informs us that in an account of the Salons published by Walter Hamilton in 1828 the fact that the "Chalomes" were made slaves by the Malays is mentioned. And in his little book (now unprocurable) Dr Anderson alludes to the fear of slavery by Selungs whom he

met at the Yimki Settlements in 1881–1882. We have abundant records of Malay piracy in the past, and I have personal knowledge of the fact that acts of piracy occurred during the time of my sojourn in Burma; for I take it that if a Malay boat holds up a Mawken boat and robs it of its shells or its provisions, or of mats and things which the Mawken have made for barter, an act of piracy has been committed. And as the Archipelago is undeveloped and unadministered, such acts are not prevented.

Owing to Malay captures and removals, the Mawken were located, and founded new centres, about Bokpyin, Victoria Point, Lawta and Tongka. This is the Mawken account of the past obtained directly from themselves.

The Mawken at Lawta and Tongka are called *Orung Lawt*, or "Men of the Sea." This name has been applied to them, and was not, I understand, self-imposed.

Each new centre of Mawken developed a new dialect. Those of Lawta and Tongka borrowed from Malay. They had to work for and with the Malay, and it was natural that they should pick up Malay words, such as the names of common things. When comparisons of words are made it is necessary to obtain the words in all four dialects.

The Dung dialect is spoken by the Mawken in the Mergui zone. It is evidently the purest form of Mawken.

The Ja-it dialect is general in the Lampi Island and Bokpyin area.

The Lbi dialect is spoken about Victoria Point and St Matthew's Island.

The Lawta is the dialect of Lawta and Tongka, on the Siamese coast.

The following is an instance, in illustration:—

The Dung word for fresh water is				*ō-ĕn*
The Ja-it	„	„	„	*oēn*
The Lbi	„	„	„	*win* (*oo-ee-n*)
The Lawta	„	„	„	*ăyĭ* (short *ă* and *ĭ*)

We notice that in the second word the long *ō* and the short *ĕ* have coalesced, and the short *ĕ* has become long *ē*. Compare the name Ouida.

The Malay word for fresh water is said to be *ăyĕr* (short *ă* and short *ĕ*). This information was given to me by a Mawken who speaks Malay, and I afterwards corroborated his statement. Now the name for fresh water is one of the likeliest words a subject race will learn from the dominating race, or which the dominating race, if greatly in the minority, will take over. What Britisher in India and Burma does not use the word *pani*? So that while it is common to look for the pure language in the names for ordinary things, it is sometimes just in such names that one may be led astray. We can hardly forget that we owe the word "basket" to the Ancient Britons, as we like to call the people of only two thousand years ago. (We like to

deceive ourselves that our civilisation is of venerable antiquity!) It is evident that the Lawta Mawken have taken their word for water from the Malay. The slight difference in pronunciation needs no explanation, for we know how rapidly the *Bilati* of Hindustani became "Blighty" in English, with an entire reversal of meaning; for in Hindustani it was the word for "foreign" (meaning the foreign country of England), whereas our Tommies used it to mean the Homeland. If in taking lists of words a student went to the southern Mawken, he might be led to repeat the statement that Malay and Mawken are cognate, and that Mawken has "adopted into the language a number of words which are not Malayan." *Whence* came these words? That question will remain unanswered. In the list of words given by Dr Anderson I notice that most of them are from the middle and the southern dialects. The word for fresh water is given as *win* and *awin*, for instance.

In a note on the census-taking I have remarked that when a comparison of languages is made verbs indicating common actions (speaking and walking), names for parts of the body, and nouns denoting common objects (such as mat or axe) will be tested, since these will probably be the shortest words, and the words which are the most likely to be retained. Yet, as has been shown, the opposite is also true, that in names for common objects lies the greatest possibility of error in comparative philology. It is interesting to notice in this

connection that those of the Dung Mawken who company much with Burmese are adopting the Burmese forms of address, *Thakin* and *Min Gyi*, to the exclusion of their own terms, *Micha* and *Micha Ada*. If this tendency be present now, it is not unreasonable to allow that it existed in the past, when, as in the instance given above (the word for fresh water) the Mawken took it over from Malay.

If it can be shown that Mawken and Malay have affinities, it will also be demonstrated that these are due to modern adoptions. And if there be anterior affinities, it will be clear that these are due to aboriginal relationships. Rather than call them "sister languages," I would designate them as "forty-second cousins."

I have entered at some length into these questions as they may be of importance in helping to fix the position of Mawken amongst the languages of the world.

The Census Report of 1901 (page 91, paragraph 140) states: "Selung may be looked upon as one of the indigenous tongues of British India." The elucidations given would seem to substantiate this opinion.

The Mawken language must be one of the most interesting in the world (I do not say *the* most interesting) because it is the language of a people who have been in a backwash for generations, and these people are now being affected by many intruding influences. There are points of contact with the language of the Filipinos, who are employed as pearl-divers in the

Archipelago, and it is interesting to notice that Filipinos and not Cingalese are the people who frequent Mergui in connection with the pearl industry. Their dealings with the Mergui Islands antedate the period of their first employment as divers, when their diving-suit ousted the Mawken from the monopoly of pearl-diving. It should be recollected that both the Malays and the Chinese made the Mawken dive for them.

Dr Grierson tells us that both "Clam and Selon are probably the residuum of a tongue spoken at an extremely remote period by a prehistoric race on the continent of Farther India."

May I—if it is not being too tedious—crib from the Census Report an extract from the Journal of the Indian Archipelago, of 1851, which is part of an article written by J. R. Logan:

"The language of the Silong of the Mergui Archipelago is mainly dissyllabic, but with a strong monosyllabic tendency. Its phonology, like that of the Simany, is a compound of Earlier West Indonesian and Ultra-Indian. It possesses several non-Indonesian combinations of consonants, such as *nb*, *mn*, *pn*, *dn*, *kn*, *km*, *gm*, *lm*, *pl*, *kb*, *kg*, *th*. Some of these, however, are found in the more consonantal of the West Indonesian dialects, particularly in some Malayan and Bornean ones. Like these, too, it affects long and compound vowels, *ui*, *ai*, *ae*, etc. Its finals are West Indonesian and with a higher proportion of consonants, or about 70 per cent., which is the same as the most

primitive and consonantal of the North Indonesian, Micronesian and Malanesian languages."

Before commenting upon this passage in its particular bearing upon the Mawken, I would draw attention to the name given to the people. They are, herein, called Silong. I have noticed that some words spelled with *n* are pronounced as if spelled with *r*, in conversations between Mawken and Burmese; *r* is sometimes substituted for *d*, in like manner. There is an island in the Mergui Archipelago, just above Sian (Kissering), which is called Sellore. On Sian, generations ago, the Mawken had a "kingdom." Sellore is another form of Selon. Has the name been transferred from the island to the people, or from the people to the island? Sian is a name applied to the Chinese, and we find the same name, with the altered terminal, in Siam. We make the *a* short instead of long, and call it Si-am, instead of Si-ah-m.

To come to Logan's remark. When he speaks of combinations of consonants, it should not be understood that the consonant *sounds* coalesce, in the pronunciation of the word; as they do not. The first of each of the pairs of consonants is sounded (not named) before the second. In some words beginning with *m* or *n* there is a slightly nasal twang, which suggests a following aspirate. The nasal twang is a sign of carelessness; how often has one heard mothers in England tell their boys: "Don't talk through your nose!" I have caught them out in many instances of

carelessness of speech, though it is an interesting fact (observed in Mawken and Makuchi alike) that "savage races" are much more careful in their use of words and their pronunciation than the average Englishman. Not a few have been the times that I have had to correct my rough dictionary through having accepted, without sufficient testing, the pronunciation of a word. For example, *chi* has almost superseded the full word *cho-i*; the word does service for "I," "me," "my." The first consonant of a word is often slurred and even dropped, so that *ba* is made to serve for *mba*. This word means "bring."

The Mawken language is ideogrammic. The verbs have no conjugations and the nouns have no inflexions. Nor can the pronouns be declined. The arrangement of words in sentences decides their meaning; but this general rule is always subject to the nice laws of euphony.

Let us take the word *chi*. The sentence *Chi lakow* means "*I* go." In *Kabang chi* (where it follows the noun) it means "*My* boat." And in the direction *M'on ti chi* it means "Give to *me*." So the one word, ideogrammic of *self in the first person*, serves for that self in all connections, subject, object or possessive.

One instance of a verb may be given: *Chi lakow* means "I am going" (now). *Chi lakow chichow* means "I shall be going to-morrow." *Chi lakow bubut* means "I went yesterday." So *lakow* repre-

sents just the idea of going, walking or proceeding. And it is left to the qualifying words to decide its meaning, or to the inflection of the voice in speaking. There is no difference between singular and plural, so that *Kamo-i lakow* means "We are going." The pronoun being plural shows that the idea of going belongs to a plurality of persons. I cannot conceive of a simpler language. Yet its very simplicity often baffled one for a long time when one desired to express a new idea in the language.

It should be mentioned that Mawken is not, like Chinese, Burmese and Japanese, a tonal language. There would be no danger of telling a Mawken to "light a fire and sit on it," when one meant only "light a fire and put the kettle on." A schoolmaster from Japan in a public lecture asserted that this confusion might occur in a careless use of Japanese. Where the Mawken have adopted words from Burmese, there may be the tonal endings; but usually these endings are ignored, and it might be taken that someone was being sent to fetch an elephant when a basket was required, or that a boy was being sent to the river when the intention was that he should go to the monastery (to bathe instead of to school)!

Those who have caught glimpses of East African names in the Swahili language cannot have failed to have noticed how many begin with two consonants, the first of which is sounded and not named, just as in the case of Mawken.

The Mawken have some handy expressions and some neat idioms. *Chichow* means "to-morrow"; *Chichow chĕ* is "the day *after* to-morrow," and *Chichow ăchăn* is "the day *after* that." And just when one thinks one can find the words in English to translate this, one is brought to confusion by finding that *Bubut* means "yesterday"; *Bubut chĕ* means "the day *before* yesterday," and *Bubut ăchăn* means "the day *before* that." What is one to make of it?

As St Mark was the first book translated, it is from that book that I am able to give a neat idiom. The fact that the disciples "reasoned among themselves" is, in Mawken idiom, *Makow ĭdup ĭdi*—simply: "They questioned, thither, hither!"

Mawken adds a term to Oceanography. We have a word for lake and a word for lagoon. The Mawken have a term to indicate a portion of the sea contained by encircling islands: the word is *Kawbŭng*. An open expanse of water amongst the islands is *t'ow*, while the open sea beyond is called *klun*. The name Mawken, as has been explained, is made up of two words, one of which is *okĕn*, "salt water." This word was the *first* term applied to the sea when it was found that sea-water is *salt*.

This is not the place to give the numerals of the language, yet it may be of interest to mention that in the case of one, eleven, twenty-one, etc., there is an ending to denote thing, and a prefix to denote person. I was able to secure the numeration up to nine ten-

thousands, nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine. The Burmese language is marvellous in being able to "block" whole æons of time, and to talk about "periods" as staggering as "distances" computed by our astronomers.

The cardinal points are *Taliŭng* (N.), *Paiya* (S.), *Mlu-i* (E.) and *Balat* (W.). They are given because *Balat* is used for west and also to indicate the rainy season.

A pathetic and peculiarly interesting example of the law of euphony is to be found in the cry of the little boy who has plunged into the sea for a cooler and has been seized by a crocodile or a shark. The little fellow cries out:

"*Ĕnong e! . . . Matai ka chi!*" ("Oh, mother! . . . Dying am I!")

How striking it is, the world over, that children "run to mother" when they are in trouble or danger!

Actually, the person more likely to be able to render assistance to a little one so attacked would be the father.

Before leaving these accounts it may be as well to give another peculiar word. When a Mawken alludes to another person's father he says *apong bi-ing*, "father your." A Mawken boy alluding to his father would say *apong chi*, "father mine." But when a man addresses his son and alludes to himself, he does not use the same word for "your" as would be used by an outsider. Instead he says *apong eng*. And if

he would say, "I am your father," he would put it thus: *apong eng ka chi*, "father your-own am I."

Are we any nearer to the answer which should be given to the question: Whence came the Mawken from Babel?

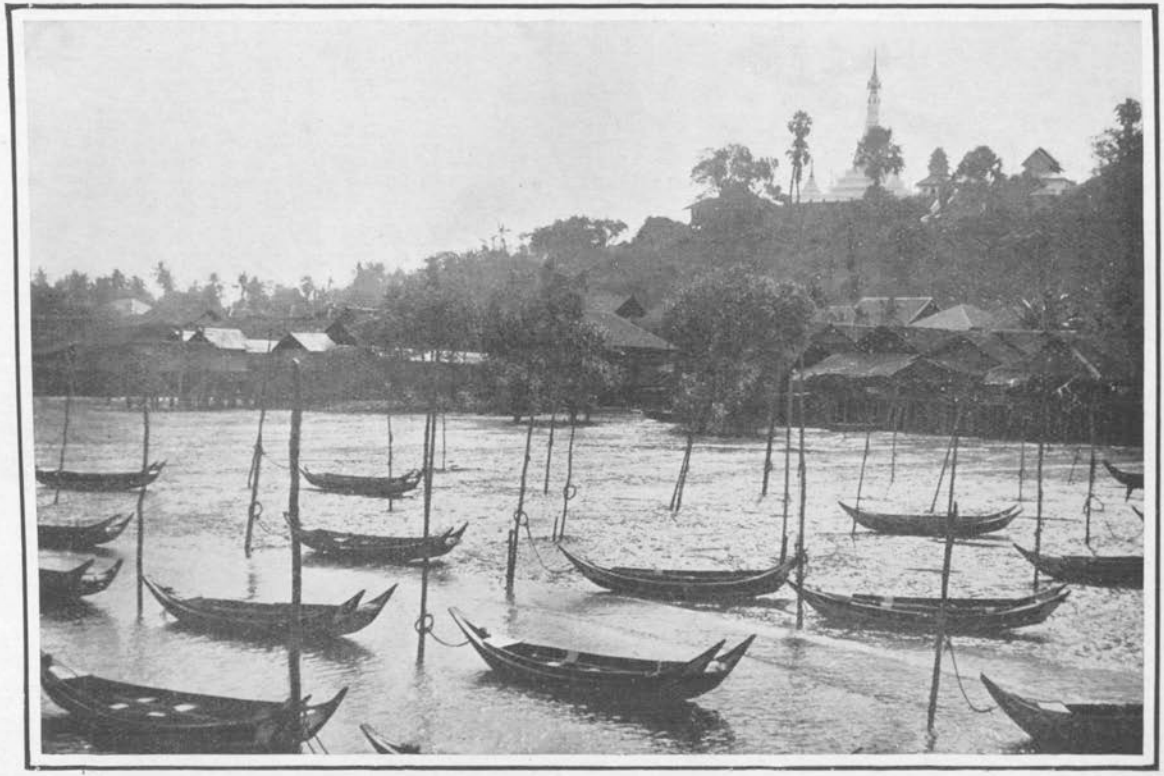
CHAPTER XIV

PREPARATIONS FOR THE CENSUS (1911)

PUNNING is an art. It is often regarded with asperity. And in polite circles it has sometimes been condemned as "bad form." But the fact remains that the ability to pun in a language depends upon a fairly good knowledge of that language! Many passages of the Old Testament writings lose their force for the reader of the English translation because the punning in the Hebrew is not brought out.

It was while making a preliminary tour of the islands to get into touch with the Mawken, and to ask groups of them to spread certain information for me, that I saw a sight fairly common in the islands. Some monkeys were capering along the sands of an island, searching the rocks for small crabs and shell-fish.

The Mawken of Dung have taken over the word used on the main for a person native to India—*Kala*—and have made it *Kula*. Now the Mawken name for these monkeys is *K'la*. It was a poor pun, I admit, and not the kind of pun to be emulated; but when I pointed to the monkeys and exclaimed, "*Kula!* . . . *K'la!*" there was an explosion of laughter, and the pun was repeated, over and over again, for some minutes.



MERGUI FROM THE HARBOUR.

The boats in the foreground are sampans. Circuit House, the Pagoda and Kyaung are on the hill-top above the town.

For administrative purposes—though administration is a term which proclaims something far from the realisation—the Mergui Archipelago is divided into the three township divisions of Mergui, Bokpyin and Victoria Point.

It was planned that I should procure boats and crews and an enumerator for each of these divisions. These enumerators were to go out amongst the islands and to do the actual work of taking names and details and entering them upon the Census sheets.

When the inhabitants of a boat had been enumerated, the occupants were to be provided with a red and white streamer, which they were to be asked to attach to a short mast at the stern of the boat, and to keep it flying there for a whole moon.

There are said to be four hundred islands and islets, so the work is difficult, especially as these Gypsies of the Sea are continually on the move, and when one is cruising round the south of a big island a whole company of Mawken may be doubling back on one's course round the north of that very island.

The enumerators had to know Burmese for the northern and middle islands, and Malay for the southern; and they were instructed to use Mawken who could speak these languages.

A Government map of the Archipelago shows that, for the most part, the islands have not been surveyed. Their true shape is often not known; and their figuration is, in many instances, given in the form of

"squiggly lines and curves." Nor are the channels charted throughout the Archipelago. Soundings taken in a middle passage tell of depths of forty fathoms, while the channel used by the launches going from Mergui to Bokpyin has at one point only a foot of water at lowest tide. It was in such a place that we were caught in my preliminary excursion. Coming out from an island where we had bivouacked the launch ran aground upon a sand-bank, as the tide had gone out more than we had calculated. In time we were left high and dry, and the launch listed on to its side. Fortunately the decline was not enough to send her heeling over altogether. We had to wait for hours, and were much relieved when she floated again without having turned turtle. I cannot say that our hair turned grey during those anxious hours, but I know that none of us aboard that launch desired a repetition of the experience.

In order to have my instructions spread abroad as far as might be, I launched as far as the south of Kissering Island, where is a small "village." This comprises a large house of a Malay family, the head of which is (or was) Ibrahim, and four Mawken "habitations," built of wattles and palm leaves and raised upon sticks. Ibrahim has taken to himself a Mawken wife, and the Mawken of the little band work for him. The Malay has a large house-boat (very different in design from the Mawken *kabang*), and he spends but little of his year at the "Settlement."

There are a few coco-nut trees, which other Malays do not molest, and a few fowls manage to maintain a precarious existence.

U Shwe I explained to me how the Census of 1901 was taken, and his version of the proceedings is given herewith:

"The people they be frightened to go in small boat in the islands. So they come to my house, and sit down here, and copy the names from the papers which I made before time."

This can hardly be a complete account of the proceedings, though it may be accepted as an account of how some of the work was done.

We found it necessary to anchor nearly a mile out from Ibrahim's house, because at ebb-tide the stretch of shallow water would have imprisoned us. While at anchor, at high tide, in that which my diary records as being five fathoms of water, Nbai gave me an exhibition of his prowess as a diver. My diary reads "five fathoms," and at this date I find it difficult to believe that there is not some error in the entry!

The Mawken are splendid divers, and when they dive for oysters or green snails they go down without suits. Deep diving needs long training and constant practice. Anyone who has not done deep diving for some years must be prepared to suffer from severe bleeding of the ears and nose. Nbai jumped over the side of the launch and dived in the usual way. Then he did various tricks. Standing upright and treading

water, he changed the movement of hands and feet; making a kind of corkscrew motion with both (the clear water enabled me to see both hands and feet), he wormed his way down to the floor of the sea. Then suddenly, after having been lost to sight for a time, he shot up to the surface with hands raised straight above his head. Lowering his hands, he steadied himself, sat back in a reclining position in the water and held up first one foot and then the other, and extracted clogs of clay and sand which he had brought up gripped by the toes. It was the first time I had seen anyone go down in deep water feet first.

During this preliminary excursion the discovery was made that the Mawken usually move about in fleets of *kabang*. These fleets may vary from ten to forty *kabang*. When a Chinaman or a Malay marries a Mawken woman he manages to secure the labour of the entire male portion of the crews; and the Mawken are not altogether averse to his domination, as it secures for them immunity from the depredations of other Malays or Chinese. Both the Chinaman and the follower of the Prophet know how to drive hard bargains; and the conditions of labour would certainly not satisfy the demands of our trade unionists.

Some of the Mawken we found had Siamese cats as pets. I did not learn of their putting the animals to any use.

On Kissering Island are some water-buffaloes, which the Karen settlers introduced—swimming them over

from the main at low tide—when they started to cultivate rice. The buffaloes are used, as by the Burmese, for ploughing and treading out the grain. On Kissering Island they are now in an almost wild condition, and might be unpleasant things to meet.

Bengal tigers also are known to roam the jungle here. They may sometimes be seen swimming the shallows. Wild pig, too, exist, and these and the monkeys render the work of starting plantations no easy one. In a night they will uproot a whole grove of sprouting coco-nuts.

As in all tropical countries, the most fearsome things are the small creatures. Here the sand-flies may be the pest. Mosquito-nets are useless against them; and one either must be bitten and tormented, or be nearly suffocated within the safety of surrounding longcloth. Citronella oil, or camphorated oil, may ward them off, and might be satisfactory if the strength did not evaporate during the course of one's sleep. Some camps, such as those on steep shores, were free from sand-flies. Much depends upon the existence of a breeze, and its direction.

The other trouble is the leech. The Burma jungle harbours the beautiful black (or dark brown) and orange creatures. It is not easy to appreciate their beauty when several of the species are firmly affixed to one's skin and are feeding freely upon one's life-blood. In this I speak, or write, as the recounter of the experiences of other people; for I myself, notwithstanding the many

jungle walks I took, escaped the attention of these striped beauties. Perhaps it was because I usually avoided jungle walks during the rainy season. Yet in the Guiana forests I was always immune from the attacks of the ticks which therein abound and from which the Indians suffer much.

In connection with my appointment by the Government for this work of census-taking amongst the Mawken, I should like to place on record an expression of my gratitude to three benefactors especially, through whose courtesy and kind efforts the great pleasure and privilege of this work was made mine. Mr G. P. Andrew, then Deputy Commissioner of Mergui, was the first to moot the idea. It was he who first suggested to me that I might undertake this work, and upon my expressing my willingness to do so he proceeded to take the necessary steps to secure my appointment. Mr Morgan Webb, the Superintendent and Director of the Census Operations throughout the province of Burma, accepted my services, and he allowed me various facilities in my work. I was fortunate in meeting him as a fellow-passenger during one of my runs from Tavoy to Mergui. Several improvements in the work were effected by him, and his report at the end of it all was full of life and interest. The Bishop of Rangoon (Bishop Fyffe) gave me the necessary leave to forsake my ordinary duties as chaplain for the required number of weeks; and although I neglected Maulmein, Tavoy and Mergui, I was able to perform

some of the duties of a chaplain when, in the course of operations, I paid my first visit to Victoria Point. There we have a wireless station, and the settlement seemed to give promise of growth. That visit was the first of the only two visits I was able to pay to Victoria Point during my five years' tenure of the chaplaincy.

By the time I was called upon to undertake the work of the Census I could preach in Mawken without making, as I hope, egregious blunders.

Besides the visit to Kissering Island to inform the Mawken there, and to secure their assistance in preparing others for the numbering, I was able to have many meetings in Mergui, at the circuit house and at the house of U Shwe I, at which I explained the steps which would be taken, told the people why we took all this trouble to know how many people of each race there were, and asked them to undertake to spread the information far and wide, assuring others that I was a friend of the Mawken and that there was no need to fly and hide themselves when they saw my launch approaching. To what extent these precautions were effective may be judged from the account of the actual work which is given in the next chapter. I hoped for the best, of course, and, on the contrary, I expected the worst. No amount of assurance from others could rob of their suspicion of all strangers those Mawken who had not yet made my personal acquaintance.

These preliminary arrangements brought me into contact with a large number of Mawken, and I was

enabled to add many words to my vocabularies. I acquired a fair knowledge of the field of operations, and I was enabled to take a general overhead view of it.

I was particularly desirous of ascertaining whether the Mawken were as few in number as previous census returns had led people to think, and I wanted to have some data upon which to form a reasonable opinion with regard to the answer which should be given to the question: "Are the Mawken dying out?" I found myself becoming more and more independent of U Shwe I, and to some extent independent of Nbai; and I found great pleasure in being able to converse directly with any Mawken I encountered, with only a rare appeal to Nbai for help.

Like the work of the Chinaman on previous occasions, my labours were voluntary, the Government paying all my out-of-pocket expenses and providing me with a launch and crew free of charge. The enumerators were, of course, paid. I am not sure, at this distance of time, whether the amount was fifteen rupees each or twenty-five rupees. The former amount equalled one pound sterling, in those days the rupee being worth one shilling and fourpence.

CHAPTER XV

TAKING THE CENSUS OF THE SEA GYPSIES

MY high-sounding title was "Charge-Superintendent of the Census Operations" amongst the Mawken.

A whole "moon" in fairyland!

Some of the islands out to sea, in the north-west, are fringed with sands of dazzling white. Picture an island with green forest and such dazzling white sands set in the midst of deep blue sea!

Here is my entry:

"Beautiful white shell-sand and clear water. A Mawken boat seen approaching the island from the open sea turned tail and fled to sea again at sight of us. Landed and had a walk through part of this pretty island until we came to a grey, pebbly beach on the east. All the Mawken who had been camping here had fled. A fire was left burning. Nbai explained that on this island Mawken camp while they are making new boats. There is good deep anchorage sheltered against stormy weather. We saw shoals of small fish in an inlet, about twenty square yards of them, and they all shot forward, with ripplings and splashings, making a loud noise, as we drew near. Various fish-eating birds, quite tame, watched our

approach, and continued their operations. There was the fish-eagle, with its white head and red-brown body; the didi, a white and bluish bird; and the ngangu, a black and grey bird. On this island, as on Dala Island, we saw some *lawbung*, or *katoi ka-e*, which told us that this island is one which is under the protection of a Good Influence. This influence, or spirit, makes his residence, or *punga*, here. One of the posts was large and the other smaller. Both were shaped and marked similarly to those on Dala Island; and, like them, both were placed just above high-water mark. There were many beautiful shells of large kinds. There are spawning grounds in the shallows around this island, and large fish abound at the entrance to the chief inlet. There are swarms also at the small island near by, and at that island, called Ch'ke, there is a rock fashioned like a woman in European dress, with three children, one standing and two sitting. The Mawken call it Ayuk Inglit (Inglit means English). Charcoal-making would be possible on this island."

Had I been a conchologist, my opportunities for collecting spirals and cones would have been numerous. I had not realised until I saw Colonel Freeman's collection at Bury St Edmunds this year (1921) how numerous and how wonderful are the shell-forms of the world.

Most of the islands which have sands have the golden sands to which we are accustomed around the coast of England. And it is easy to picture the green, gold and blue in the brilliant sunshine of the tropics.

Some of the southern islands near to Victoria Point are bordered with maroon-red sands, as the islands are composed of laterite. Perhaps because it was new to me, I regarded this picture of green, maroon and blue as more beautiful than the others.

While some of the larger islands have mangrove swamps, where crocodiles lay their eggs and water-snakes are undisturbed, many of the islands possess beautiful bays, in which the water is so clear that one can see to the floor of the ocean. Upon this floor one may see, as I have seen, coral growing up, green, yellow, or purple-tipped. It is a matter for sentimental wonder of a wholesome kind that multitudes of tiny creatures should combine together to produce such intricate, beautiful and delicate designs. Would that the cities of our vaunted civilisation were as wholly æsthetically delightful!

What a contrast is the Mawken's life to their habitat!

In some of the bays one could see the sea-urchins moving about the floor. They have the appearance of pin-cushions stuck with black pins. Those who would bathe in these waters must beware. When taken out of the water and examined, it was found that they had numerous eyes on the under side, some of which were bright red, others opaque white and others deep blue. In moving about, the shorter under spines, as well as the longer upper ones, are manipulated with a brushing motion, in sets, backwards and forwards.

Where the waters were deep we saw whales at play. The vaporising of the hot air as it spouts up from the vent-hole is a pretty sight, and the rolling and diving fascinate the onlooker.

On the first day we called at Dala Island; and while I was taking the names of some Mawken encountered there, members of the crew of the launch raided the plantation and helped themselves to a bunch of bananas and a couple of pine-apples. Upon discovering this, the men were given a wigging, and the Mawken owner received a shilling as compensation.

Going on, we reached Coin Island, where the Mergui Shell Company had secured a lease and had undertaken to make oysters produce pearls. The Company had built a large cemented tank, into which the oysters were placed, and a steam pump refilled the tank with sea-water every day. The tank had been protected with an elaborate arrangement of live wires, so that, should any marauder attempt to filch a few oysters from the tank, the slightest disturbance of the wires would cause an alarm bell to ring in the house on the hill above.

This experiment did not succeed. It was found that the oysters died. So at the time of my visit the tank was abandoned and the oysters were placed in large cages sunk and buoyed in the bay.

It was asserted that by inserting a small particle of foreign matter between the shells when the oysters opened to feed, or by boring a hole through the shell and inserting the foreign body through it, the desired

result would be achieved—the oyster would coat the intruding substance in self-protection, and a pearl would be formed. The shell of the oyster is made of the same stuff as pearls, hence its name mother-of-pearl; and sometimes the foreign body, sometimes a pearl, is covered up with a spread of this stuff, adhering to the inside of the shell. The coat can be removed from the shell, and it is then known as a blister. Some of these, which are regular in shape, make pretty pendants. During the decade which has elapsed since then the Japanese have developed this industry, and perturbed dealers in pearls are "moving heaven and earth" to get scientists to "demonstrate" that these "Japanese pearls" are not the real thing! The scientists who can discover the difference between these assisted pearls and those formed by the oyster when a natural intrusion of a foreign body takes place will be clever men indeed!

Upon inquiring how the supply of oysters was secured, I was informed that the Mawken were engaged to dive for them, and were paid fourpence apiece for each live oyster brought in. Not a bad speculation, even if the oyster produced no pearl, for the shells are worth enough to bring in a profit of several hundred per cent. on the fourpence. And there was the usual chance of finding that some of these oysters contained pearls, unassisted by human device! The Mawken's ignorance of market-values was again their undoing. Business morality is rather a hot subject, it strikes me!

It was at Coin Island that I first saw the spoonbill oyster and the dagger, or cruciform, oyster. It was told me that occasionally "black" pearls are found in the spoonbill oyster.

The Mawken were paid in opium and negotia.

I slept aboard the launch, at anchor in the bay, and early next morning we weighed anchor and proceeded westward. We soon entered a *kawbung*, or portion of sea encircled by islands, and surprised a fleet of *kabang*, which fled in several directions, through the outlets between the encircling islands. Before the last one could escape I was able to hail its occupants, and when they heard the words "*Mawken măn*ut!" they turned round and came alongside. The signal was somehow passed to the Mawken who had fled, and they came in from various directions. There were about forty *kabang*, and I found that my enumerator had not "taken" any of them. So I entered the names upon my own sheets, giving register number, name, sex, condition (married or single) and approximate age. The Mawken were much interested in the fire-ship, and they examined everything they could lay eyes upon. One voluble old woman wanted me to pay her for providing me with particulars of herself! How we should welcome each decade if we all were remunerated at the enumerations!

I bought several pieces of a black, stick-like growth of a limestone nature. It grows up like reeds from submerged rocks.

Upon this occasion I found that each boat contained an average of seven occupants. Sometimes I found as many as ten people in a boat. On rare occasions there were only three or four.

During this cruise of the Archipelago I found four different Chinamen who had taken to themselves Mawken wives. These men were trading, as had done U Shwe I, and they each dominated a fleet of Mawken.

We were unable to visit the westernmost islands, as we found the rollers far too mighty for our small craft, and so badly were we buffeted in an attempt to reach a distant island that we had to turn and flee.

On some of the islands we saw the flowering trees, so common in the tropics, ablaze with blossoms—mauve, orange, white and vermilion. Alamandas and other flowering creepers were plentiful, and *niger piper* was discovered.

After going down to the westward, we passed inside of Elephant Island, which is one of the sights of the Archipelago. I was unable to visit it, but my uncle did so, upon the occasion of a gubernatorial inspection, and here is his account of it, taken from *A Civil Servant in Burma*:

"Perhaps the most notable sight was Elephant Island. It stands alone, its green slopes narrowing to the sky. At low water we approached the shore; our boat with difficulty and strenuous effort pushed over sands hardly covered by the shallow sea. So we came to where the

water deepened, at the mouth of a gloomy cavern. Entering, we found a low, winding tunnel, just wide enough for our boat, with a glimmer of daylight at the far end. Emerging, we reached the middle of the island, a still lagoon, encircled by smooth marble walls. A magic scene from fairyland: a snow-white ring, with an opening like the crater of a volcano; in the midst the purple lake. One pictured it as the secret refuge of buccaneers, who here might hide in safety. Our time for admiring this lovely landscape was limited; too long a stay would have imprisoned us for hours, till the tide fell and left the tunnel navigable."

Then we went on to Victoria Point. The S.D.O. was a Mr Buchanan, a Eurasian, who, with his wife, extended a wonderful hospitality. My diary tells me that when I departed Mrs Buchanan gave me a "little present" — truly Eastern in its plenitude — twenty-six small loaves of bread, eight pawpaws, some bananas, three large currant cakes, some tins of peas, some beans, some walnuts and some eggs.

Readers will hardly believe me when I say that I had neither a subscription list nor the hat-of-begging with me, yet when I had dined, a farewell dinner, with Captain Williams (who had a rubber plantation at Victoria Point) he added to my gifts some eggs, jams, butter, dholl, biscuits and salt! Such is colonial hospitality!

Before leaving Victoria Point I was kindly invited to visit the rubber estate of Captain M'Cormick, at

Paul-a-tum-tum. He took me out in his buggy. It was the most beautiful drive I had in Burma. The road zigzags about the hills, through thick jungle of trees, bushes, creepers, palms and ferns. There were birds of many kinds and of sweet song. From certain vantage-points views of the sea could be obtained, where the jungle was not. On the estate tigers abound, and I was shown where wild elephants had been playing nine-pins with the fencing-posts. Turkeys, geese, ducks and fowls were thriving. Oranges and guavas and pine-apples were growing, as were bananas; beautiful orchids (Burma is an orchid country) and kalladia were plentiful. In going round the estate I saw a reaper at work cutting the grass, and a gang of men including five nationalities; one man was a negro; the others were Malay, Chinese, Burmese and Siamese.

It would be possible to write pages about this pleasant visit to Victoria Point: I must recollect, however, that the Mawken and their habitat are my principal theme.

Passing up towards the Gregories, we camped for Sunday at an island where a few Mawken boats were drawn up on the beach. Cashew-nut trees were growing in profusion. In the evening I went ashore and doctored the sick, so far as my knowledge and my equipment allowed. I was told that some more Mawken were at another island, and a boat was dispatched to fetch them in. It was a picturesque sight to view nineteen boats come in, with sail set, skirting the island

and arranging their stations. The old *micha-blen* was very friendly, and he presented me with a Mawken mat and a bottle of wild honey. I gave him some marmalade, cake and biscuits. He did not tell me, as had two Mawken boys, when offered cake: "I do not know how to eat it."

At night our anchor cable seemed to be of gold, and we saw the golden outlines of a small fish chased by the golden outlines of a larger one beneath the surface. These effects were phosphorescent.

The Mawken here asked me to give them "letters" which would introduce them to Government officials, should they wish to report molestations by the pearlers or other adventurers. These letters were given, and, as the Mawken were far from the main, were probably never used.

At another island visited I gave away some rice to a needy Mawken, and administered medicine to a little child. In gratitude the mother gave me a fowl. I was loath to take it, yet I felt that even she should not be deprived of the opportunity of giving expression to the gratitude she felt.

This is the entry in my diary:

"Went ashore and gave rice and medicine. A mother gave me a fowl for medicine given to her child. Paddled back in a Malay boat. Saw a crane. After breakfast paddled ashore and walked along the coast to another Mawken 'settlement.' Crossed a creek and saw a buffalo clear into the jungle. Then crossed

a rocky stretch behind a mangrove swamp. Found a long hut with two projecting platforms in front. Climbed up and sat under the shade of the overhanging trees. Through a small opening in the shore jungle the sea was visible. No one at sea could sight the settlement. Found three families here. The men were Malays and the women Mawken—so it was not really a Mawken settlement. Discussed my mission and the language, Nbai and his family, his doings and travels; plants, trees, fowls, and the children, the buffalo sighted and the Karens. I was informed that the Karens on the west of the island have seventy buffaloes, and that snakes and tigers abound. I saw the pugs of a tiger at about ten yards from this hut. On the return I cut a path through the jungle, and found many plants of interest, including wild jessamine. I found that the Mawken had an extensive botanical nomenclature. Upon revisiting Ibrahim's settlement a Malay boy climbed a tree and twisted off seven coconuts. A Malay woman gave me these, together with five 'ripe' ones. We opened two and drank the milk from the nut. While engaged in these pleasantries, two buffaloes rushed through the settlement, and scattered all the Mawken engaged in making mats, and their children, and the fowls and dogs. One buffalo was chasing the other. After paddling back to the launch I saw one buffalo come out of the jungle far along the coast and bathe in the sea. There had been some goring, and it is probable that the buffalo which

did not come out to bathe its wounds had been killed."

The next day we rounded the island, and I landed and marked out an extent of land which had been applied for, as a free grant, for a proposed Industrial Settlement. I found another sick child on the shore, and after giving it medicine the mother made me a present of a fowl. She had procured this from Ibrahim's place. This fowl almost immediately laid me an egg.

On the northward run hence we sighted three Mawken boats, which fled before us. I chased them in the launch's boat, and came up with them hiding amongst some big rocks on a headland. Enumerated here thirty-two people. I have it on record that by this time the remaining loaves of bread presented at Victoria Point were too sour to eat, and so I took to cake and biscuits. These loaves were a fortnight old. We could do no bread-making on the way, as we had no baker aboard, and in those days I had not mastered the art myself. My instruction at a Sawston bakery had not yet been received.

On this cruise I added considerably to my dictionary. I shall not, however, try anyone's patience by giving more language examples.

The Mawken actually entered on the sheets numbered one thousand eight hundred and ninety-three. The probable number is five thousand at least, and my reasons for saying this may in part be given.

Before making that explanation it may be of interest if I give a few of the names we encountered : Chichai, Puzu, Choli, Maduan, Lawong, Kape, M'in, Nyamya and J'mi. The reader may amuse himself, or herself, by trying to decide which are the names of males and which of females.

From the necessarily inadequate information gleaned with respect to ages, I should say that the average age attained is somewhere between fifty and sixty. The women would seen to be as long-lived as the men.

CHAPTER XVI

REASONS FOR COMPUTING THE NUMBER OF MAWKEN

IT has been explained how the census-taking was a privilege accorded to me, and some idea of the work has been afforded. It remains, however, to give such particulars as will account for my estimate of the real number of Mawken amongst these islands. The tract which comprises the islands is classed as non-synchronous, and it has been shown how unsettled are the people. They are diving in this bay to-day; hunting wild pig upon that larger island to-morrow; and they will be seeking turtle amongst those islets the day after. The different groups, or clans, know how to find each other's boats, as each clan has its secret code, and "telegraphs" are arranged, which enable friends to find friends. The devices are as simple as those used by Boy Scouts and Girl Guides; the Scouts and Guides do but copy those whose whole life is the Scout life.

Of the total entries on the sheets, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-three, the males numbered nine hundred and sixty-eight, and the females nine hundred and twenty-five.

As upon previous occasions, the Archipelago, from Tavoy Island to Victoria Island, was, like "All Gaul,"

divided into three parts. Each part had its enumerator, and the charge superintendent had a launch. This enabled the superintendent to tow the Burman who had the northern section to the south of Domel Island. Here, under direction, he entered the names of the occupants of four Mawken ships and the members of a small fine-weather encampment. He was instructed to work the islands back to Mergui; but upon being left he made a bee-line for Mergui! His sheets showed only eighty-two names. A glance at the map of the Archipelago would show that this enumerator was useless. On my way down my sheets showed six hundred and fourteen names taken in this division, yet most of the islands were unvisited by me. I accounted for a thousand missed on my run through, and information was received of over nine hundred more who had not been approached. During the fine weather the Mawken scatter greatly, and companies of from thirty to a hundred may be found bivouacking on different islands. They are hidden from sight, and boats passing through the Archipelago would be unaware of their existence. The number of the wanderers cannot be guessed. If, however, we accept the six hundred and fourteen plus eighty-two recorded on the sheets, the thousand known to have been missed, and the nine hundred of whom information was given, one is justified in asserting that the Mawken population of the northern division (from Tavoy to the south of Domel) is at least two thousand five hundred.

There are known to be large companies which hover and bivouac around Elphinstone and Ross Islands and the islands to the westward of them. These islands were not visited; nor were the islands to the south of them visited. King's Island, on the western shore of which bands of Mawken work through the fine weather, was not touched. Bentick Island and those west and north of it were unvisited, and only the south of Domel Island was approached. It was not the superintendent's duty to enumerate (although he did so), and two thousand five hundred may be taken as a low computation of the number of Mawken in this division.

The middle division, from South Domel to the Gregories, was allotted to a young Eurasian, who succeeded in entering four hundred and eighteen names. It is worthy of note here that his entries showed an average of seven persons to each *kabang*. I found boats with ten, and even twelve, occupants. This enumerator was picked up at South Domel and towed to the Gregories, which, however, he did not reach. That is to say, he did not go amongst them. He passed up to the east of Lampi Island, and, running short of food, he shot an arrow for Mergui. He reported that for three days he lived upon bananas and water, as no settlements were encountered. His crew did not understand rationing, and because the rice was there it was used prodigally while it lasted. Down here the Mawken are much molested by the Malays.

It is clear that all but a small section of this division was unworked, and the unworked parts included the extensive habitats to the west of Lampi. Upon my return trip two summer camps were visited by me, and over three hundred names were recorded on my sheets. One of these camps was on Tawi Island. Owing to the unwillingness of the serang of the launch to let his men cut cord-wood on the islands, the Mawken camps on Jting and Jtaw were left unvisited. Over three hundred were thus missed. From these facts, and from information received from the Mawken, it is safe to compute the number of Mawken in this division at one thousand five hundred.

Attention may be drawn to the fact that the Dung division—the northern—has more Mawken than the middle and, it will be seen, the south. This may perhaps be taken as confirming the Mawken statement that they entered the Archipelago from the north. I do not lay too much stress upon the coincidence of the larger numbers with the statement.

In the southern division the Burman enumerator "completed" his work, for which he was allowed a month, in eight days! He entered two hundred and thirteen names. About one hundred of these were obtainable at the settlement, which exists on the mud-flat, at Victoria Point itself. He thus listed just over a hundred in the whole of his district outside. Incidentally, he reports having missed about fifty boats, which fled away from him. Large numbers of Mawken are

reported as hovering about St Matthew's, St Luke's and St Andrew's Islands. The fact is known to Government officials, and it was corroborated by Nbai, who had a good knowledge of the entire Archipelago. Two boats from these islands were met with while we were at Victoria Point, and the occupants stated that no one had been out there to count the people. These boats did not fly the red and white pennant, which would indicate that they had been dealt with.

Each of the three enumerators was supplied with tracings of the map of the Archipelago. It was arranged that on the tracing they should mark X on every island visited, and ⊗ with a circle round it on those islands where Mawken were found.

The entries made by the enumerator of the southern division showed geometrical inexactitudes. In the first place, the course marked as having been taken could not have been followed out by a country boat in the time. Besides this, one of the islands marked as "Visited—no Mawken," was taken by myself on the return trip. I found and enumerated a fine-weather camp of over a hundred people. From that island I sent a *micha-blen* to another island similarly marked, and he brought in twenty boats, with occupants numbering one hundred and thirty people. These Mawken told of two neighbouring islands with large camps, and they stated that Loughborough Island was the home ground of still larger numbers. Loughborough Island was marked as "Visited—no Mawken."

In making computations I have allowed one thousand as the number of Mawken in the south division, from Victoria Point to the Gregories. This is, I think, absurdly low.

Allowing the validity of the safe and timid calculations given above, the entire Mawken population of the Archipelago, from Tavoy Island to St Matthew's Island, is at least five thousand.

My method of computing numbers was to multiply the number of *kabang* seen flying, or reported to be located anywhere, by five. Seven might be a truer average. I preferred to risk under-estimation rather than to exaggerate, for census purposes.

The census-taking (regarding this as the entering of names upon sheets) was, as on previous occasions, a failure. Whereas, however, the people were thought to number under two thousand, and to be dying out, it has been shown that they number over five thousand, and are not dying out.

The work of enumeration is difficult, and a thorough census-taking under present conditions is not possible. The difficulties arise from the wandering habits of the people and from their great fear of strangers. Here are a few instances illustrative of this fear.

At Cantor Island, where the misnamed "Prince of the Mawken" has his little plantation (the Mawken name of this island is Dala), we were told of a camp of over fifty at Polly Island. We reached the place at nightfall. Upon waking up and preparing to go ashore

to enumerate, it was found that every Mawken had fled. During the night they had packed up all their things and gone off.

We proceeded to Maingy Island. Here we were held up by a *bahun*, or sand-bank. Getting word from some Burmese living on a rock of the presence of four or five Mawken who were jungle-cutting, we pulled in towards the shore in a small boat. The launch had to anchor a mile out. Getting out of the boat, we waded nearly another mile, through mud and water, walking gingerly over sharp rocks and barnacled boulders, and we reached, with lacerated feet, the mouth of a small creek. A little way up, hidden in the jungle, we found four huts and thirty-two people. Each hut had its *kabang*.

When the tide flowed we reached another camp, to the east of Maingy, and there heard that our Mawken of Polly Island had crossed the shallows to King's Island. We were making a course westward, so we had to leave them unentered. At Polly Island we heard of fifty *kabang* on an island to the east of Elphinstone. We reached this spot at sunset, just in time to catch a glimpse of *kabang* doubling back round the island. So we missed between two and three hundred. We could not double, as I was not an enumerator, and had we tried to double back after all the fleeing *kabang*, we might not have finished our work at this date, ten years after we had begun it. As the enumerator did not visit these islands, but made

a bee-line from Domel to Mergui, all these Mawken were unentered.

Passing round Elphinstone Island, we made for another island upon which we saw a large fire burning. At our approach some Mawken boats which were coming in from a neighbouring islet turned tail and fled to the open sea. When we landed not a soul could be found.

When about to anchor at Merghi Island, towards the end of my cruise, we saw three Mawken boats at rest in the bay. As soon as the nose of the launch appeared round the headland they were "up anchor and off." We jumped into the little boat and gave chase. About a mile and a half away we came upon them, hiding amongst large boulders, round an elbow of the island. When asked, "Why did you run away?" they replied, "*Nakot ka*," which means "Being afraid."

A few days previously, as we skirted the rocks and shallows of the Gregories, two Mawken *kabang* in sail were seen coming towards us. Upon sighting the launch they rolled down the sail, pulled in amongst the rocks, and we saw them scudding away as fast as they were able. We could not follow them.

There are two notes that I would add:

When running down towards Victoria Point we passed through a regiment of jelly-fish. These were of various colours, of brilliant and delicate tints. As the prow tossed up the water the fish were rolled away from the launch, and it was seen that they were formed

of two discs, one over the other, the tentacles being attached to the lower. Some of these fish, which we drew up for examination, floating in buckets of water, measured just over a foot in diameter. While in the sea they formed the haven of refuge for companies of baby fishes of the vertebrate orders. These little fish swam round each of the jelly-fish, and darted between the discs for safety when the water of the sea was disturbed. There were hundreds of the jelly-fish, and each one we could see had its company.

Throughout the Archipelago we frequently disturbed a long knife-like fish which flapped along the surface of the water on its tail, the body out of the water, slanting at an angle of about sixty degrees. It would often travel like this for twenty or thirty yards.

After my report on the census-taking the Government of India wrote requesting me to compile a brochure on the Mawken for the new series in the Ethnological Survey of the Indian Empire. The letter followed me to England, and as I was preparing to go out to British Guiana to take up work in the Hinterland, I had to reply that the honour could not be accepted.

CHAPTER XVII

BIRTHS & MARRIAGES

THE Mawken are monogamists. I did not come across a single instance in which the man had, after the manner of Abraham and Jacob, taken to himself a second wife and concubines. I am not in a position to say that no case exists, nor that an instance of a man so doing has never been known amongst the Mawken.

It is clear from all accounts that the Mawken are, like many peoples living the simple life, remarkable for their fecundity. Those questions of feeding, clothing and educating which harass parents in countries under the iron heel of Western civilisation are not known to the Mawken. The number of children he has bears no relationship to his probable ability to send them to Oxford or Cambridge (in these days it would be his probable inability!).

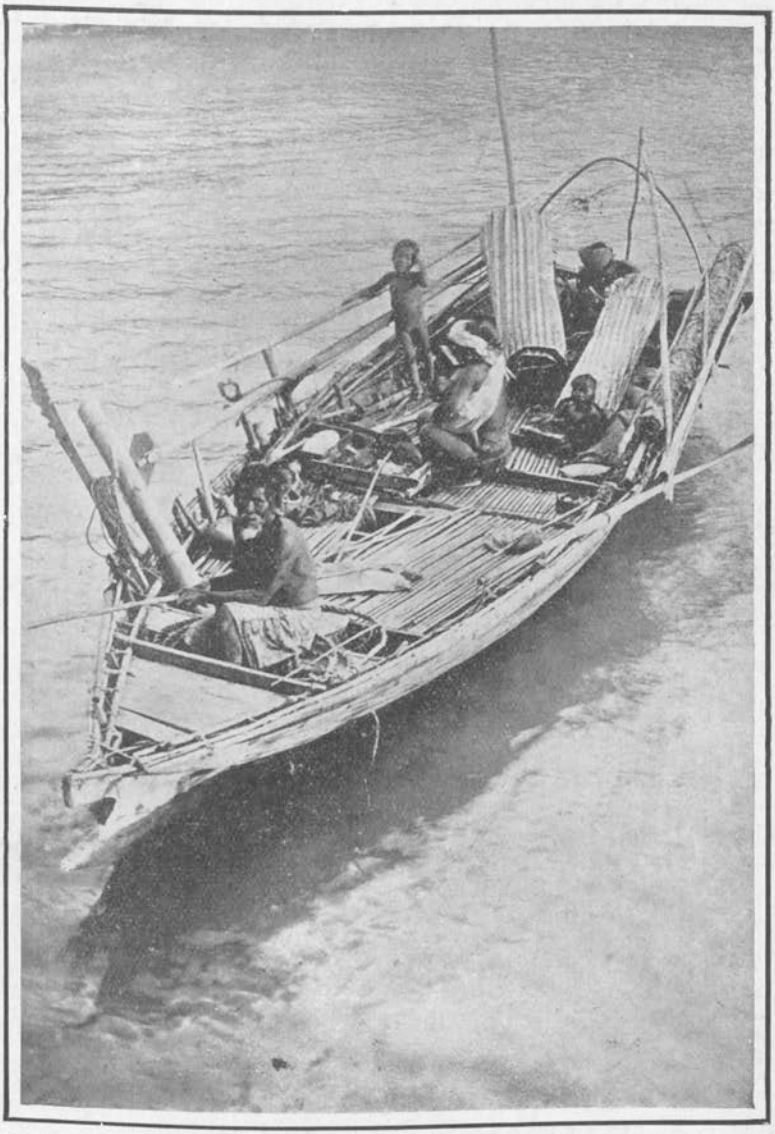
This renders the whole marriage relationship one of simple freedom; and there being no artificial restraints, there is a natural self-restraint.

In many instances it was found that the Mawken women give birth to a child once in twelve to eighteen months; and but for conditions prevailing, which will be described in a succeeding chapter, these Gypsies of

the Sea would, like the Israelites in Egypt, multiply exceedingly.

I could find no trace of puberty ordeals so common amongst other primitive peoples. This inability, on my part, is not conclusive evidence that no such ordeals exist.

Upon one occasion I came across a party of Mawken bivouacking upon the sands of an island. The palm-leaf coverings of the *kabang* had been lifted off and placed on the sands as shelters from the heat. These quaint-looking little "cubby-houses," as we would have called them in our childhood's days, dotted about on the sands, with the green of the jungle behind, and the blue of the limpid sea in front, together with knots of children squatting in the shade, some of the old folk and nursing mothers sitting beneath the shelters, and groups of men standing or sitting in conversation, or helping some of the women with the camp fires, made a charming picture. In the shadow of one of these shelters was a woman reclining and in the pains of child-birth. I rendered such help as I could to make her more comfortable, having to proceed on my way without waiting for the event. I had no reason to doubt that the Mawken women present were not sufficiently versed in the art of midwifery. The Burmese customs (such as applying hot bricks) attending child-birth are not in vogue with the Mawken. During the rough weather of the south-west monsoon, and upon other occasions, the birth of children takes place in the *kabang*. The



A KABANG OPENED OUT.

This shows the decks of split bamboo, and the roof rolled up in the stern.

whole process is regarded as perfectly natural, and the children see in it no occasion for curious prying and mysterious whisperings and indecent mirth. These unnatural tendencies amongst civilised peoples are the result of an improper "modesty" and persistent lying on the part of parents to their children, an unhealthy state out of which we are fast extricating ourselves. Mawken youths and maidens grow up with a nice modesty, and an entire absence of that dangerous curiosity which comes of being kept in a state of blameworthy ignorance, stupidly confused in the past with child-like innocence.

Some there may be who would resent such expressions of opinion, yet one feels it to be almost a duty to draw the comparisons and to assign the causes. The sex atmosphere in England is often aggressively unwholesome.

Mawken women carry their children either in a sling, or on the left side, suspended from the right shoulder, or astride the back. The latter way is customary amongst the men, who, like the males of all the Eastern races I have known, take pleasure in their children. This habit of carrying the children, together with the pitching motion of the *kabang*, gives to the Mawken men a strange gait ashore. We are familiar with the rolling gait of our Jack-tars, due to the rolling of their vessels at sea. The *kabang* are too shallow to roll, and they make up for it in pitching. When ashore the Mawken men walk with the body lurched forward

from the waist. The effect is striking, though scarcely graceful.

During the whole of the census operations and my other trips to the Archipelago I came across only one barren woman. The fact was especially mentioned to me before I could inquire about the number of children in the family, and her condition was regarded as specially worthy of remark. She did not seem to be proud of her distinction. It is noteworthy that her husband had not taken to himself a second wife. Generalisations from this single instance coming to my knowledge cannot safely be made, for usually the one exception to monogamous marriages amongst primitive peoples is the result of the childlessness of the first wife (*ab initio*, or when it ceases to be with her after the manner of women).

At the island of the camp described above the Mawken made me presents of shells and stalactite. There are grottoes, similar to the Cheddar Grottoes, in the hills of some of the islands.

No elaborate marriage ceremonies exist, as amongst the Burmese. As with the Jews of old, there is nothing in the manner of a "religious service," or *solemnisation* of marriage. The attraction between youth and maiden is almost immediately observed. When the girl is of the same group there are many occasions when they can be naturally thrown together; and if the attraction for the man is to be found in a *kabang* of another group, the swain may easily find it

convenient to make a prolonged visit to that group, living and working with it. I know of several instances of Mawken of the Ja-it division (comprising many groups) paying extended visits to Mawken of the Dung division; and it was on account of this that I had at different times Mawken of the Middle Archipelago with Nbai at Maulmein.

When it is time to bring matters to a definite conclusion, "joiners" are sent by the young man to the *kabang* of the young woman. The general custom is for them to talk the matter over with the girl and her parents. Should the answer be favourable, the young man comes in person to fetch away his bride. It seems to be the common custom of Eastern peoples for the bride to go to the bridegroom's home. It is the custom amongst the Burmese, Indians and Chinese. The reasons are, of course, economic. Domestic economy rules where it is often least suspected of holding sway.

Amongst the Dung Mawken, who are taking to the Burmese habit of betel-chewing (the areca nut being wrapped in the betel leaf), the custom is coming into vogue of the joiners offering to chew betel nuts with the father of the girl and any other members of the family who are to take part in the ceremony. If the offer is accepted, agreement is signified; and if it is declined the joiners cannot fulfil their task.

Probably even a Mawken youth feels that he is more gently let down if the joiners return and announce,

"They will not chew nut with us," than if they had to blurt out the unpleasant truth in so many words, "She has no wifely glances for you."

Whether there is nut-chewing, or whether the older custom holds good, it may be the case that a marriage feast is given. This will depend entirely upon circumstances. In view of the hard lot of most of the Mawken during the cyclonic season, one may safely assume that most of the marriages take place during the fine weather.

Then the wife returns to the *kabang* of her husband: she will live with his people until he strikes out for himself by fashioning a *kabang*. This step may not be taken for years, or it may follow close upon the birth of the first child.

Matters are so arranged, however, that the old people are not left in a *kabang* to themselves when their children grow up and marry. Mawken need not to be enjoined to "love, honour and succour" their father and mother. It comes naturally to them. So far as I could ascertain, no such custom existed amongst them, as amongst the Nicobarese, of the Nicobar Islands, farther out in the Indian Ocean—namely, that of taking the old folk out to sea and dropping them overboard to make meals for the sharks.

The reason for any such custom, which found its counterpart in the sending of the old folk down the Kaieteur Fall (British Guiana), was that the decrepit aged were a nuisance to others and to themselves, and

the best thing to do with a nuisance was to get rid of it! Logical in the extreme!!

Although one must not succumb to the strong temptation to discuss Divorce Laws as existing amongst civilised peoples, it may be in place to make a few comparisons with regard to outlook and practice.

In civilised countries to-day marriage is taken to consist of a civil rite, at a registrar's office, or a combined civil and religious rite, in a place of worship. It is held that people are married when they have procured the *Legal Recognition*, or this recognition combined with a religious blessing, or *Solemnisation*. It is held that there is *no marriage* without one, or both, of these. And a woman may give birth to a dozen children and still be *unmarried*. She is called an "unmarried mother." This definition of marriage is based upon the grounds that marriage is not a physical thing, but a legal and religious thing. In our state of life it is insisted that there must be mental and spiritual affinities. The physical relationship alone is not marriage. This enables men to go abroad, to cohabit with women of other races, have several children by these women, and to come back home and be married to a woman of their own race.

The Mawken (and the Makuchi, of Guiana) regard marriage as a physical relationship for the procreation of children. A living together without this (where physical defects do not exclude the possibility) is merely friendship—the love which all human beings should

have for one another, where possible. The first physical relationship is marriage consummated. And if this relationship is not maintained until the death of one of the parties there is sin. The *second* relationship is the *sin*. The Mawken do not claim that nothing but the physical intercourse should be required; they insist that there should be love. But physical intercourse *per se* is marriage, and a first marriage may be dissolved by either party taking another partner. Such a course of action is regarded as sinful; and the Mawken and the Guiana Indians are very jealous of their women. Unlike the polygamists of Africa, who regard marriage as the relationship of one man with several women (to all of whom he must be truly husband; promiscuity being sinful), the Mawken and the Makuchi Indians regard the taking of a second woman as not good. "*Amona ha!*" the Mawken say. To both Mawken and Makuchi, to talk about an *unmarried mother* is a contradiction in terms; mere nonsense, in fact. The birth of a child is proof of marriage. Harlots are unknown—until civilised races introduce this disgrace. Mawken and Makuchi are, in their natural state, careful to safeguard their girls for a proper relationship. And it was found in Guiana, as it has been found in Africa, that where missions start boarding-schools, and congregate girls and boys separated from their home life, youthful connections are likely to occur. If they are "interfered with" and repressive measures taken, promiscuity results.

The wise missionary tells such people as the Mawken and the Makuchi that their relationships, even before Legal Recognition and our Religious Solemnisation, are true marriage. He points out that under civilised government the legal formalities (which are unnecessary to them) will safeguard property rights, in case of disputes brought to our courts, and that as Christians this relationship should receive the religious blessing, or solemnisation. He makes it clear that these things do not constitute the marriage—they are accompaniments. Marriage consists of the relationship, as it is for this world only. But there should be love (mutual friendship), which is capable of eternal persistence. A second relationship, after the death of a first husband or wife, would not "make things awkward" in the next Life, in which the personality, freed from this bodily *form*, is neither male nor female, but "as the angels."

If the first relationship is marriage, and the second (in the lifetime of both parties) is the sin, very much more care is taken about this first relationship; and Europeans, who base their action upon the idea of a legal contract, do harm of which they do not conceive when they cohabit with these women and yet regard themselves as "unmarried."

Because it is recognised that the *vinculum carnis* alone should not constitute marriage, we have illogically, it seems to me, arrived at a denial that the *vinculum carnis* is marriage. We have made the Legal take the place of the Natural, to the confusion of morality.

And yet at least one pope and at least one of our present-day judges have pronounced nullity of marriage in cases in which the *vinculum carnis* was not, or could not be, effected.

The Mawken regard us as having pretended to deprive marriage of that which makes it superbly natural to man, in this life; and neither they nor the Makuchi Indians regard us as being sincere when we claim that truest holiness in this life is found only in celibacy, since all sex relationship is of the nature of the unclean. I found, however, that they would recognise that it might be the *duty* of some to abstain from marriage entirely.

These primitive peoples, living their simple lives, in many instances "give one furiously to think."

Often they show us that civilised peoples are more ingenious than true.

CHAPTER XVIII

KINDRED & AFFINITIES

OUR table of kindred and affinities giving prohibited degrees is of poor sort when compared with the nice distinctions in relationships observed by some Eastern peoples. The Burmese have a remarkable table of relationships (not to be confused with prohibited degrees); and the Mawken are careful to mark distinctions which we take no trouble to observe. With them primogeniture is regarded as being of considerable importance, in accordance with ancient Eastern ideas, transferred to the West, of the rights and the privileges of the first-born. It would be of great interest to know the grounds, physical or psychological or social, for this idea, which so entirely ignores merit and efficiency, and does such injustice to the members of a family who could not all have been first-borns.

The Mawken are very careful to distinguish between an elder and a younger brother, though their present mode of living would seem to carry with it no advantages whatever for either. They differentiate between the wife of an elder and the wife of a younger brother in a family, and between the husband of an elder and the husband of a younger sister. And yet, although

they mark all these distinctions, they would seem to possess no word for cousin. The case is similar amongst the Burmese, I am told. We know that in olden days first cousins, because they were the children of brothers and sisters, were also spoken of as if they too were brothers and sisters. The relationship was regarded as being very close, and we can admit there was some reason in this way of looking at things. Physically and sentimentally they might be regarded as of one family, even though neither the physical nor the sentimental "grounds" might be tenable were the question examined scientifically. It is rather surprising to find that, with the Mawken, cousins, even first cousins, are not considered to be of the "inner circle" of the family; and a cousin is referred to as *ja*, which is the ordinary word for *friend*.

The principle upon which the differences are based has not been discovered, unless we can call "primogeniture," which is nothing more than a *descriptive* term, a "principle." It has been customary for so long and in so many countries to accord the first-born peculiar rights and privileges that we have almost deceived ourselves into the belief that he is the heir to such rights and privileges as being necessarily the rightful recipient of them, and that almost to the degree of *sub specie æternitatis*. The Mawken are still free from the chains of legalisms, and it should be possible to obtain from them, ere it be too late, the principles which at present guide them. It is a question

into which I did not think of inquiring when the opportunity was mine. Like that of the average traveller, my obliviousness to opportunities must have been "colossal."

For the purposes of comparison and of record I shall now give a list of the relationships to which distinctive names are given by the Mawken.

The word for wife is *binai*, which is the same term as for woman or female. When any woman can be referred to as *his* woman, or when any woman can be "coupled," in speech, with any man, it becomes self-evident to Mawken that such woman is, *ipso facto*, a *wife*. Similarly the word for husband, *kanai*, is identical with the terms for man or male, and the mere fact of coupling any man with any woman indicates the relationship of husband. If this be borne in mind as the list of expressions is studied, the terms employed will easily be understood.

During my census work, whenever I took the name of a man and of the woman who accompanied him, or seemed to me to be related to him, the question was always decided for me when a Mawken, pointing to each in turn, explained: "*Kanai ku binai.*" Literally this would be "man and woman"; actually I knew it to mean "husband and wife."

The word for father is *apong*, and that for mother is *enong*. Grandfather is *ibap*, and grandmother *ibum*. Children in general are *chanăt*. As there are no inflexions, the singular and the plural are identical. A

man's own child is *anak*. If the child be a son it is *anak kanai*, and if a daughter, *anak binai*.

If an uncle be a father's or a mother's elder brother he is alluded to as *tawha kanai*; while an uncle who is a father's or a mother's younger brother is called *nyi kanai*. We must not confuse a *tawha* uncle with a *nyi* uncle.

The case of aunts is similar. The elder sister of one's father or mother is *tawha binai*, and the younger sister of either is *wa binai*. It is interesting to find that while *tawha* stands for both uncle and aunt, if they be elder brother or elder sister (the addition of *kanai* or *binai* showing whether the personage is male or female), the word *nyi* does not serve for both. The reason for this needs to be ascertained.

There would seem to be no general term for brother or sister, but I was given general terms for uncle and aunt, *kamon* and *ua*. When the reasons for the existence of such general terms can be ascertained, light upon the past history of the people will probably be thrown, revealing some interesting facts.

It is always necessary to speak of elder or younger brothers or sisters, and so of their wives and of their husbands. We cannot assert that the Mawken have a proverb, "Age before Honour," though it is quite clear that in all their relationships primogeniture is carefully marked.

An elder brother is *aka kanai* (whether he be the brother of a girl or of a boy), and a younger brother is *uui kanai*. An elder sister is *aka binai*, and a

younger sister is *uui binai.* In this we notice that *aka* and *uui* may mean either brother or sister (elder of younger) so far as the relationship goes; and the adjectival use of *kanai* and *binai* denotes of which sex the relationship consists.

We must realise that the Mawken, having no writing of their own in general use (although the language is now committed to writing, it is not in general use), have no written code of laws. Their laws are simply their unwritten customs. Strictly speaking, therefore, they can have no term for brother-*in-law.* The relationship is, however, by custom, noted as a distinct one, so an elder brother's wife is *lua,* and a younger brother's wife is *ipan binai.* The husband of an elder sister is *biai,* and the husband of a younger sister is *ipan kanai.* This use of a single term for the elder and diverse terms for the younger in the relationship (as in the case of the aunt and the uncle) arouses interest and calls for further inquiry.

It would appear that nephews and nieces are not distinguished, as only one word is given for each, regardless of their being the children of elder or younger brothers or sisters. A nephew is *kawman kanai,* and niece is *kawman binai.*

A father-*in-law* (as we should call him), on *either* side, is *tawka kanai,* and a mother-in-law is *tawka binai.*

It is well to notice the change from *h* to *k* in the middle of the words for uncle and aunt, and those for father-in-law and mother-in-law.

In the event of a man's wife dying and his taking to himself a second wife, this second wife is described as *binai něk*. *Něk* means small, or lesser, when applied to children or to things; and the idea seems to be that the rule of primogeniture should be applied here also, and that the second wife occupies a position similar to that of a second son as compared with the first wife and the first-born. The term *něk* is applied right through the relationships and I need not list them here. It is sufficient to remark that a boy or a girl calls his or her stepmother *enong něk*, and the stepfather (for widows may remarry) *apong něk*.

Chocho kanai and *chocho binai* are the terms for grandson and granddaughter respectively. Grandfather and grannie have the same soft heart for their grandchildren amongst the Mawken as is the case amongst us Westerners; though it is not the case with the Mawken, as with the people of India, that the grandmother (being the senior woman) "rules the roost." With the Mawken the natural rights of mothers seem to be intact.

A daughter-in-law is a *nyatoi binai*, and a son-in-law is *nyatoi kania*.

I discovered that it was the usual custom for a man to have only one wife, and although I do not know enough to be able to assert that such an event rarely takes place, I can place it on record that I did not find a single instance in which a widower had remarried, and Nbai, whose wife had been dead for some years, never

showed the slightest indication of a desire to marry again. The terms for stepfather and stepmother indicate that second marriages *do* occur. If the figures given in my returns of the proportion of females to males amongst the Mawken indicate the true proportion throughout the race, it is evident that second marriages are rather limited, unless widowers and widows pair. Polyandry is unknown to the Mawken: not that I should have expected to find it existing.

The whole Mawken idea of family relationships is pure and very simple. If Westerners could revert to it, in practice as well as in theory, many of the complications now troubling us would be dispelled. Some may like to assert that the Mawken idea is non-moral rather than moral; but as morals are simply customs which have come to be regarded as *right* and *true*, it seems to me that such an assertion begs the whole question. We cannot assert that morals are the mechanical application of mechanical law arbitrarily imposed upon man, even if we would like to go on to claim that the imposition of it had been Divine.

The Mawken regard the doings amongst them of a few men of the fair-skinned races as marriage, followed by heartless desertion, and, impelled by past experiences and their own simple outlook, they are particularly careful to remove their women to a place of safety when strange men of other races are encountered. For these reasons no women were allowed in the boat which took me for the voyage to Dala Island. For

these reasons the women in the hut drew away when I ventured to address them directly. And for these same reasons, when I came up with Mawken who had had no previous knowledge of me, I would find the men and the boys on the sands of the islands, while the women and the girls were in hiding in the jungle.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SICK & THE DOCTOR

LIKE most, if not all, primitive peoples, the Mawken bear pain and sickness with fortitude. They have not formulated a stoic philosophy, however!

They have names for several ailments and symptoms. Whenever it is limited the seat of pain is located, and the sickness takes its name from the part affected by the pain. We could not expect that they would realise that fever is not a sickness but a symptom, so it is not surprising to find them alluding to the epidermic temperature, or to the quaking when ague accompanies it.

Malaria is not uncommon. Its cause is unknown, save to the few instructed by myself, and no precautions are taken against the anopheles. Unlike many Africans and many of the peoples of India, the Mawken do not anoint the head or the body with oils; nor do they use the face paste fancied by the Burmese. A common prescription for fever and ague is powdered stalactite in a draught of water. The stalactite, being a marvellous thing, should have marvellous powers: this seems to be their line of reasoning. As it is of limestone formation, and on that account hardens the

water, there is "something in it." This physic is given also for dysentery.

Bubonic plague does not seem to have occurred amongst the Mawken. In Burma it is fast travelling southward. It is endemic at Maulmein, and there are outbreaks at Tavoy. Quarantine regulations staved it away from Mergui, which is ninety miles lower down, and the Mawken may be immune so long as it does not make Mergui its home. Plague was introduced into Burma from India by the numbers of coolies coming over to work in the paddy-fields, and at the rice and timber mills.

Small-pox, another epidemic disease, has reached the Mawken. It has been devastating in its effects amongst them; and being ignorant of its nature, they spread it rapidly by *flying together* to another area when it breaks out in one district. But for periodic outbreaks, causing high mortality amongst the children, the Mawken would number many more thousands than they do to-day. The cause of small-pox is supposed to be an evil influence, and safety is supposed to lie in flight from the place of first occurrence.

Similarly with cholera. That also is attributed to an evil influence, and the safest thing to do is to fly. In their ignorance they do not realise that they are but spreading these ills and infecting the shores of all the islands they visit in their terror-stricken flight.

In spite of their exposed life, lung troubles do not seem to be common. I did not find a single instance

of a Mawken with a cold, a cough, or phthisis. But it cannot safely be inferred from this that such things are unknown to them. Scientific comparisons have shown us that primitive peoples suffer from fewer sicknesses than civilised nations. An artificial life multiplies our maladies. We learn that the beating of the big drum of "the deadly *climate*" of tropical countries is much overdone, since in these countries the number of enemies is fewer; and with due precautions and sober living the white man can be "safer" in these parts than in England. Exercise, moderation in all things, the prevention of constipation, and protecting the abdomen from chill are the simple rules of health in these places. The Mawken have exercise of necessity. They must hunt and search for their food for the most part. They have no dinner if they catch no fish. While they fear dysentery, they are not seriously concerned about constipation. Their scant clothing reduces the risk of chill.

Owing to malnutrition and to the insanitary conditions of the *kabang*, such as I have previously described, not a few of the Mawken suffer from skin disease.

One entry in my diary reads: "Found a two-moons child literally eaten up with sores. Washed it in Lysol and water, and applied sulphur ointment and a clean dress."

I have no recollection as to whence the dress came, whether I or the mother produced it. My recollection is clear, though, that this little babe had not two square

inches of wholesome flesh on any part of its anatomy —head, arms, body or legs. I have not seen such a mess before or since. This case was found in a camp on an island where the Mawken were at work boat-building. I spent Saturday afternoon and evening and the whole of Sunday there, and opportunities were afforded for imparting knowledge and acquiring it myself.

My notes for this week-end refer to ammoniated tincture of quinine (not for colds), cajaput oil, smelling-salts and hot milk! They include also a reference to Hole's *Life of Jesus of Nazareth*, and the record that Nbai took up the explaining himself, thus showing that he knew and recollected the subjects thus painted and illustrated.

Upon the first occasion of my outing with Mawken, when we had the picnic on the island sands, a *micha-blen* was induced to show me how he treated the sick; and subsequent to the tour for the census-taking I was able to get a photograph of this *micha-blen*, who posed, with a boy, for my edification. In the photograph the old man—for such he was—is seen squatting beside the boy, who lies prone upon a mat. It is supposed to be a case of fever. The cause is attributed to an evil influence inhabiting the body. So the *micha-blen* borrows a fan (in the islands, in primitive state, he would have a palm leaf or a bunch of leaves) and vigorously fans the boy. Near by he has a small carved tray, rather deep, with horned corners. Upon one edge of

this is stuck a small candle, made from beeswax, which is lit. The tray contains parched rice. From time to time some of this parched rice is thrown across the body in the intervals of fanning (which is to cool the hot and evil influence), and incantations are repeated. This ceremonial may last for some time, the aid of unseen powers being invoked earnestly. At last the *micha-blen*, on the supposition that the aid has been forthcoming, bends over the body, places his mouth to the boy's chest, sucks vigorously at the skin and violently expectorates. The boy should now get well, for the evil influence has been sucked out and spat to the winds.

It recalls the physicians' books of Elizabeth's reign and the curious remedies then applied. And it makes one delight in the days of Homocea and Zam-Buk! —pray be not too cynical.

From all accounts it would appear that the incantations are couched in an esoteric language. I found a similar claim made amongst the Makuchi Indians, with regard to the language of their *peazung thamê* and their heroes of prehistoric times.

Here is an incantation as given to me, together with the explanation as furnished:

Tawlawn bawa . .	Help! Take away!
Mana bawa . .	Whither taken?
Tawlawng bawa .	Help! Take away!
Tawlwang otan . .	Help! Possess (me)!
Tawlawng guching .	Help! Tremble (me)!

Machut badan . .	Thoroughly use me.
Tawlawng, Gului .	Help! Gului!
Pana chabut . .	Quickly extract!
Tawlawng kakun .	Help! Grace!
Tawlwang tangu badan	Help to get up well.
Chio badan nawla .	Slightly well! Set free!
Tanga jali . . .	Make strong the arm!
Bula bachung . .	(It) must depart.
Chma pulu jali . .	I put my arms together.

The explanation is, of course, a rough paraphrase, since the verbs are not conjugated, and pronouns are omitted altogether. The word implying a request for the sickness to be taken away is the same as in the question as to whither it has been taken. The request to be "trembled" is due to the fact that the *micha-blen* look for a state of ecstasy, during which the body quivers or trembles. This is a psychological phenomenon not confined to the Mawken. Gului is the personal name of the assisting power, who is a good spiritual influence, capable of taking possession of the healing medium. *Kakun*, translated "Grace," refers to that inflowing something which effects the cure. The statement that the sickness *must depart* is an "act of faith." And the placing of the arms together from the elbows to the finger-tips accompanies the words relating to this action, and implies supplication.

My personal knowledge of the Mawken and the Makuchi and Akawatho Indians would preclude my endorsing the statement of a writer who asserts:

"A wizard is one who is endowed above his fellows with natural acuteness, knowledge of the phenomena of nature, insight into character, and with an abnormally developed capacity for roguery."

I am not in a position to challenge the truth of the statement as regards the particular experiences of the writer of that statement; I can assert only that the wizard meets a need, is, in fact, the subject of curious psychological states, believes in himself, and considers it fatal to his work to allow even the slightest suspicion of a lack of self-confidence or impotence upon any occasion, and makes his appeal to the imagination and the will.

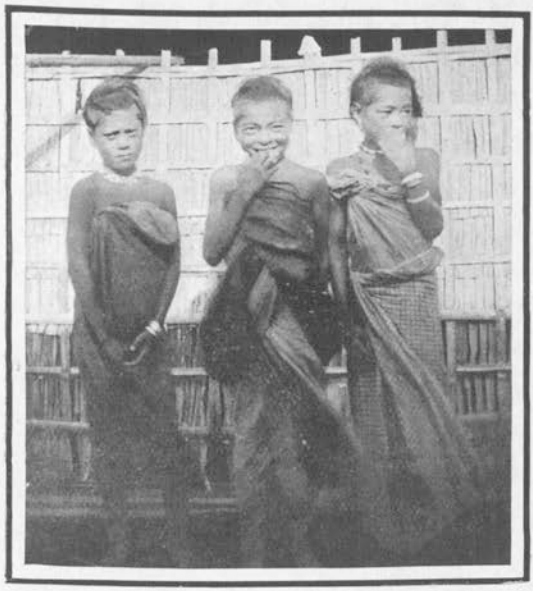
I do not justify his refusal to admit lack of ability when he himself knows there is such a lack, any more than I should justify the teacher or the parson who refused to admit ignorance on any point of his special subjects to his pupils or his congregation. And these appeals to imagination and to will, which are made in such vast ignorance of realities and truth, strike me as being deeply pathetic, and as calling for a helpful sympathy and understanding, rather than for a superior denunciation. It is not possible for me to forget the history of Mesmer (the inaugurator of mesmerism), with the French Academy's cavalier dismissal of the whole thing as "mere imagination"; nor can I ignore the cures effected in my own presence, and proved to be "permanent" for succeeding years, by hypnotic suggestion; nor can I dismiss the embryo science and

art of psycho-analysis with a contemptuous wave of the hand. Wizards amongst the primitive races have a partial and implicit knowledge of certain psychical processes which we are now beginning to investigate scientifically, and to make of them subjects of explicit knowledge. People other than "heathen wizards" are given to devious devices when attempting to "save their face."

A refusal to believe in a possibility renders impossible some psychological phenomena with their physical consequences. In a subsequent chapter it will be shown how I had to make an appeal, not to "the will to believe," but to the "will to *dis*believe." It was, we may say, the obverse of the same shield.

Amongst the Mawken the number of minor ailments and accidents is large. One man was encountered who had lost an eye. He told me he had been attacked by a sea-bird whose nest he was robbing.

En passant, I may mention that the Makuchis regard an egg as a living thing, and in their language the plural is the plural for animates. They would parse "eggs" as being "common gender." Many of them will, however, eat turtles' eggs raw. The Mawken would parse "egg"—did they do any parsing—as "neuter gender." I think we have to admit that we must class ourselves, in this case, with the Mawken, amongst the thoughtless. As the Makuchis do not pen up hens apart from roosters, the question has not arisen in the past as to the gender of an unfertilised egg.



MAWKEN CHILDREN

By no means scared at being "taken" for the first time in their lives.

GATHERING THEIR DINNER.

Mawken children picking limpets from the rocks, not a very easy task, but one at which they show themselves very expert.

The Mawken have not any idea as to the nutritive value of eggs; and their *micha-blen* will not be found recommending lightly poached eggs for invalids, and small baked custards for convalescents. Is it superfluous to mention this?

So far as I could ascertain, surgery is entirely unknown amongst the Sea Gypsies. The feats of a Horsley or a Molyneaux would astound them. A surgeon would find abundant scope for his skill amongst these people, and in his early days he would be acclaimed as a wonder-worker.

In one of the photographs taken specially for me by Mr Kinch, who may be classed as an artist photographer, some children are shown gathering limpets from rocks while the tide is at ebb, and in this photograph the patches of white, indicating skin diseases, are plainly visible.

I did not find any blind Mawken. The old people ("old" as applied to Mawken may be, for all I know, merely comparatively true) possessed good sight. Nor did I meet with any deaf or dumb. It must be understood that I am recording my own findings, and that I do not mean any general conclusions to be drawn from them. To say that blindness, deafness and dumbness are unknown amongst the Mawken might be untrue. All I can safely say is, "Not known to me." I did observe a single instance of pronounced astigmatism, in a man.

It can be readily understood that the roving life of

the Mawken, for so many years, yea, for so many generations, has resulted in the disappearance of skill and the loss of knowledge, simply from lack of opportunity to make use of them. And an advance in knowledge and skill has been prevented by unfavourable conditions for experiment. Capacity is there. Nbai was a quick learner, and it did not take him long to judge the proportion of Lysol to water, and how to apply a rolled bandage to a limb.

All instruction was given orally and visually, and I am convinced that this method is more rapid and more effective than the study of books. Questions can be asked and answers given by the way. Mistakes can at once be corrected, and very often entirely avoided. We really must disabuse our minds of the fallacy that an illiterate person is necessarily an ignoramus and inefficient. It is often the case that an illiterate person ("unlearned and ignorant") is well informed and competent.

Perhaps the day will dawn when there will be well-trained Mawken doctors and nurses.

CHAPTER XX

DEATH & BURIAL

DEATH is the greatest mystery of life. This is a paradox which hints at a great truth. Right through the world, wherever man treads, births, marriages and deaths are regarded as matters of outstanding interest and importance. Therefore, when one comes across a people such as the Mawken one is inquisitive to know what are their ideas about these great events, and what are their customs connected therewith. The Mawken, as we have seen, are a remnant of a people formerly inhabiting the mainland of Burma. The chief, though not the only, people of Burma are the Burmese, who for the most part are Buddhists. Their ideas of death and "after death" are fairly well known. We have to keep the fact clearly in our minds that the Mawken are neither Buddhists, nor are they an offshoot of the Burmese people. But for the fact that they found a "last trench" amongst the islands of the Mergui Archipelago they had disappeared from the face of the earth, as a separate people, years ago. Their having taken to the roving life of boat-dwellers, the life of Gypsies of the Sea, has been the cause of their persistence until the present time.

These people face death daily. Although this statement may be said to be true of all races and of every

individual, yet it has a particular application to the Mawken. As they are almost amphibious people—the men at any rate—they add the dangers of the sea to those of the land.

The Mawken, with the exception of those who visit the ports, have no shops and bazaars where they may buy their food. They have to procure it often under conditions of danger to life and limb. Such dangers peoples in civilised countries do not have to face.

Owing to the unsettled life and to the inability of the Mawken to keep their own poultry and cattle, such things as eggs, if desired, must be diligently searched for and taken from the nests of wild birds. The eggs mostly sought after are those of sea-birds, which build on the rocky parts of islands which are dangerous to scale. I recollect upon one occasion, when census-taking, off one of the islands of the northern area, the habitat of the Dung Mawken, my attention was attracted to a man who had only one eye. There was an empty socket where the second eye should have been. I called him to me and made inquiries as to the cause of his loss of an eye. In explanation he told me that he had been climbing some precipitous rocks, on a bird-nesting expedition, when he came across a sea-bird's nest with eggs. These he proceeded to take. Simultaneously with his realising what was happening, there was a swift swoop, a fierce peck, and his eye was burst open. Fortunately for him his foothold was good, as otherwise he would have pitched backwards

down the rocks and come to an untimely end. I inquired if such cases were common, and I was told that several instances of similar accidents had been known. Sometimes death resulted, either (apparently) from shock or from the fall. I failed to discover which is the sea-bird that attacks in this way. Whatever it is, it instinctively aims at the eye.

We do not have to face death when we go to collect eggs for our breakfast, if we keep fowls of our own.

Although the Mawken are subject to the power of suggestion, which may induce bodily ailments resulting in death, they do not "just lie down and die" as do many of the people of India. Not infrequently, however, they are kept in constant fear of death, in such cases as those in which the *micha-bap*, or wicked man, works with the jaws of the jumping fish. In the little bag which Nbai took away from the *micha-bap*, or, more correctly, which the *micha-bap* handed over to Nbai, besides the objects already enumerated, was a pair of the jaws of a jumping fish. The jaws, like the fish, were originally of a greenish hue; now they are dried and faded almost to olive-brown. The *micha-bap* did not always use a wax figure. Instead he would upon occasion take out from his conjuring bag a pair of jaws of a fish; holding one in either hand, he would manipulate them to represent jaws opening and closing, taking care to do this in the presence of his victim, and he would foretell the death of this victim in the jaws of a crocodile. It was a simple and fairly safe thing to do,

as he set no time-limit to the tragedy. The roving life of the Mawken would prevent those who heard the prophecy from witnessing its fulfilment, or, owing to death coming some other way, proving its fallacy. Should a man meet his death in the jaws of a crocodile, then, of course, somebody would recollect that it was foretold, and the fame of the *micha-bap* would be enhanced. As in betting, we hear of the prize-winners, while the thousands of losers pass unobserved. Where there are no reminders memory soon fades, and numerous unfulfilled predictions pass unnoticed.

In an intensely interesting and very enlightening chapter in *School of the Woods* Long instances some manners of death, and deduces important truths. So here I would make reference to ways in which death comes to the Mawken, in order to give some of the facts upon which they base their theories. When Man stops to consider how he dies, he is led, upon reflection, to inquire why he dies. Then he cannot be at rest until he has found, or feels satisfied that he has found, the meaning and the hope of death.

Death may come to the Mawken by the peck of a sea-bird. It may come in the jaws of a crocodile. It may come in the swift attack of a shark. These are all accountable, and easily so. Crocodiles abound in the mangrove swamps, and in the mangrove-belted shores of some of the islands. Generally speaking, the islands nearer to the mainland are the ones fringed with mangrove, for it is there that the mud brought down

in suspension by the rivers is deposited, as the current of the stream meets the flow of the tide. Mud-fish and crabs may be found here, and in search for these things one may accidentally tread upon the head of a submerged crocodile before noticing that it is not a gnarled log like others lying about. It is unnecessary here to portray the details of such an accident.

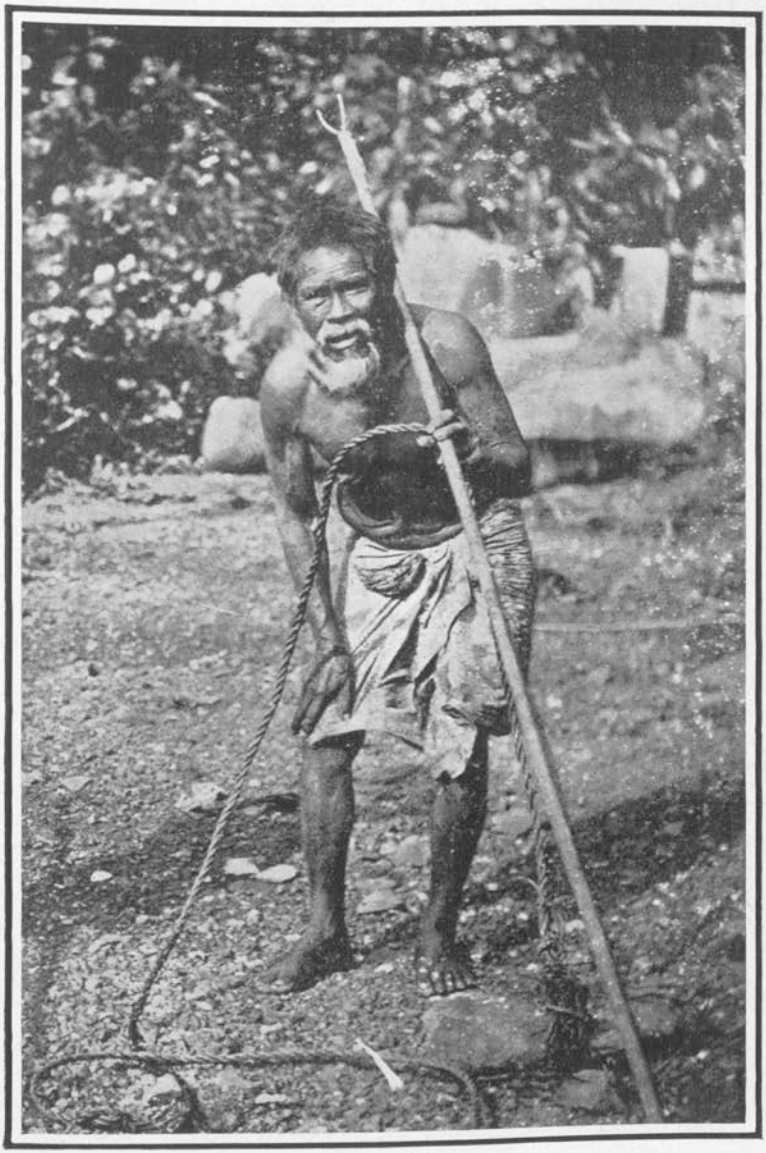
In diving for the pearl oyster, unprotected by a diving-suit, and in diving for the green-snail dangers from attacks by sharks are constant. The Mawken are quick and observant; but the sharks are swift in their attack. I recollect an occasion upon which I was watching two men diving off some rocks. They plunged and reappeared several times. Then they dived in again and came up no more. All that one could see was a spread, which was evidently blood, on the surface of the water.

Sometimes, especially in the deeper diving, a man may be seized with cramp. Before he can be rescued he is drowned. Or a man may unwittingly weigh down upon some sea-urchins on the ocean floor. The spines of these creatures press into his flesh, and he is drowned by being disabled. I was told of two white men who were bathing off "The Gregories," a group of islands in the Archipelago, who dived down to a sea-urchin-infested bottom and, being disabled, were drowned.

The commonest cause of death would appear to be malaria. Death in this way raises an entirely different question to the Mawken. It is not an accountable accident. The theory which covers accidents with

birds, crocodiles, sharks, snakes or tumbles will not cover deaths caused by sickness. There is need for further theorising. The Mawken, like all humans, ponder these things.

Throughout the Archipelago there are many islands upon which I did not encounter a trace of any of the one hundred and twenty-three species of the mosquito which I am told exist in the world. On other islands which have flats and damp and swampy patches mosquitoes multiply exceedingly. In countries where people sleep in hammocks, the hammocks are slung over smouldering embers and the mosquitoes are smoked away. The Mawken sleep on mats, without any covering. Their boats may be drawn up on to the sands, or tied or anchored near the water's edge. There is no knowledge of the danger of the mosquito, and no precautions are taken. Over and over again during the tours of the islands I have found Mawken shivering with ague like aspen leaves in a breeze, and upon taking their temperature have found it to be in the danger zone. Prophylactics are not conceived of, and measures are not adopted to prevent the existence of contributory causes. The precarious existence of these people during the rough weather of the south-west monsoon precludes their taking the precaution of keeping the body well nourished. Malnutrition results in enfeeblement of the system, and the phagocytes of the blood are unfitted for resisting the attacks of malaria and other germs. It is saddening to learn of



A GRANDFATHER.

An old man with a spear, rope and stone anchor lying at his feet used for mooring the *Kabang*.

the numerous cases of avoidable deaths, especially amongst children and adolescents.

In a tropical area, especially where water is drunk from streams almost evaporated during months of sunshine and then fouled by the floods which wash putrid and decaying matter into them, we should expect that people who know nothing of sterilising, or filtering, water should suffer from dysentery. If the Mawken ever knew of medicinal barks, infusions of which would counteract this disease, they would seem to have lost all knowledge on this score. I cannot assert that the knowledge is non-existent anywhere amongst them. All that I can say is that I could find no trace of such knowledge. I could not feel satisfied that my directions as to dieting would be faithfully carried out after my departure, for until the Mawken were convinced of the reason for it, they would doubt its necessity. I have seen patients suffering from dysentery eat the ordinary foods, without any apparent realisation that food had anything to do with it.

Of all the horrors, small-pox is the most dreaded. Probably because its revolting effects can be seen. From time to time an epidemic breaks out. Those who become too ill are left upon some island to die; those who are in the early stages are carried off by the fleeing party. They do not know that they are taking the horror with them and are spreading the dread disease. Small-pox has not become epidemic amongst the Mawken, I think one is right in saying. Epidemics

seem to be caused by the contact of some of the Mawken with people on the mainland.

It may be of interest to mention that leprosy, which, like plague, was introduced into Burma, was not found amongst the Mawken. Nor did I see any lupus. Skin diseases, however, are common, especially amongst the children. These diseases are aggravated by the filthy condition of the *kabang* and the often insufficient nourishment. In children one may frequently see the arms and legs blotched with scabs, sores and patches. Sometimes blood-poisoning takes place in an open sore and death ensues.

Deaths by accident, deaths by disease, deaths by prayer, or prediction.

The theory which the Mawken believe fits all but accidents is the theory of evil influences, or, if we will have it so, evil spirits. It may be an evil spirit which causes an alligator or a shark to attack, though it is not necessarily so. The Mawken eat fish, birds and animals, when they can get them; so the wild creatures, or some of them, eat human beings, when obtainable. It is a question of diet. The theory which predicts evil spirits is a theory of Life; and that includes a theory of Death. The evil spirits are without bodies. They cannot be seen, yet they see and know. Further, they may be invoked. So death of a physical body does not exhaust the possibilities of spiritual life. And the Mawken are very clear in their minds that when we look at each other we do not see each other with the

physical eyes. All that we see thus is the body, in which the true self dwells, and from which it departs at death. So it comes that death is merely a gate to a different kind of life.

The Mawken believe in the persistence of life after death.

The following incident, recorded in my notes made while in Burma, throws light upon the Mawken ideas with regard to body and soul, or the personality and its temple.

One morning I was sitting at my desk writing letters in my newly built parsonage at Maulmein when Nbai came into the room, bringing me a chit which my man-of-all-work, Anthony, a Tamil "boy," had written. It was an order for some stores from one of the shops in the town. Nbai was to go for these things and to bring them back with him. He asked me to sign the chit; but instead of wording the request as we should do, he asked that I should put the name of my body to the paper.

More than once I had noticed the use of this expression when I was endeavouring to ascertain the name of some child. A typical instance is the following.

In taking down names I had secured Chonoi, the father, Nya, the mother, and Dami, the name of a little boy. There was a younger boy whose name also was required. I put the question to him in Mawken: "*Nanyan hiing hanong ka?*" ("Name your what is?") The little fellow looked abashed, then he hung his head, and squirmed himself away through the little

knot of people gathered round me. "*Nanyan liing hanong ka?*" I repeated. "*Makao!*" ("Speak!") I added. There was no result. Then I turned to some of the adults present and asked them what was the little fellow's name. Instead of telling me themselves, one of them went after the boy, took him by the arm and led him back to me. I repeated my question. Still no answer. The boy began to look frightened. Presently a man chimed in with a dominating tone of voice; but his question was not: "What is your name?" It was: "What is the name of your body?" Then we learned that the name of his body was Jana.

While there are grammatical reasons for this, into which it would be useless for me to enter unless readers possessed a knowledge of the language, there is the distinct understanding that the name is given and belongs to the bodily part of one, as being that part by which we are identified in this life. Not infrequently the names are the result of some physical characteristic. I do not think that the Mawken belief about the future includes a belief that Jana here will be Jana hereafter. The label for the body will be unnecessary for the spirit; and though there had been thousands of boys named Jana in this world, the spirit of each will be so distinct hereafter that confusion cannot be possible.

One thing worthy of remark is the belief that the spirit of the departed does in many cases become an agent of hurt and evil when once it and the body have dissolved partnership. This unaccountable belief, as it appears to

me to be, exists in many parts of the world. Man conceives of something in the nature of a spook, and then fears the spook. Even though the spirit is that of one who has been very loving and much beloved in this life, the idea still holds sway that after death the spirit of that loved and loving one may be an agent of evil. Even with such wise people as the Chinese this belief is prevalent.

From ideas of death we are led on to study the customs of burial. When first the Mawken took to the islands there was no burial of the dead. When a child or a woman died the corpse was taken to one of the selected islands, a barbecue of sticks was erected and the corpse was laid upon it . . . and left. The islands so selected were the smaller, well-wooded ones, upon which no game for hunting was to be found, and no spring of fresh water existed. Such islands not being of use in these ways could well be devoted as cemeteries for the dead. Except when a body had to be placed upon them, these islands were studiously avoided. Were the dead person a man who was the owner of a boat, this boat would be hacked into two portions, the corpse being laid in one and covered with the other. This was done when the man had owned a *chapăn* or small boat, or when his *kabang* was of small dimensions. Having so arranged the corpse, with weapons and other belongings laid beside it, the coffin was taken to a cemetery island, a barbecue was built and the coffin was placed upon it. One end was, of course, open. For a few days, or for a few weeks,

afterwards the relatives would pass within hail of the island and call out the name of the deceased. This was to make sure that death had actually taken place, and that it had not been a case of trance. The custom suggests that the Mawken had known cases in which the supposedly dead had revived. The possibility of burying people alive was avoided.

Two things led to the Mawken, with but few exceptions, abandoning this practice. I do not know how long ago it was that burial superseded the barbecue. It was found that the crocodiles would clamber up the low stagings and carry off and devour the corpses. It was also discovered that the Malays, who were Mohammedans, and had no fear of corpses, often robbed the cemeteries. And as a result of these discoveries the Mawken have gradually abandoned the practice of placing corpses on barbecues. This is a general statement. Some few Mawken, I was told, still continue the practice. They are the Mawken who rove about the more distant islands of the Archipelago.

In place of the islands of platforms one may now see a burial-ground. Such exists at the south of Kissering Island, where a Mohammedan man, Ibrahim, has taken to himself a Mawken wife. This marriage has resulted in other Mawken gathering round and seeking the protection of the Malay, working for him and being paid by him. Ibrahim has a large Malay house, with compartments for living and sleeping. The Mawken have erected their aerial dog-kennels in

a line with this house along the shore, just above high-water mark; and behind these dwellings, or shelters, not fifty yards away, I saw the slabs of wood, standing like steles, which mark the graves of the departed. I admit that I neglected to inquire if they have any custom of orientation, and whether the slab is placed at the head or at the feet of the corpse. One often fails to be inquisitive enough when there are very mines of information waiting to be explored!

When burial takes place the hole in the ground is dug to a depth of four or five feet. The spot chosen is one in which the soil is sandy and light. The digging is done with paddles (used for the *chapăn*) and with nature's forks. Mawken, as a rule, have neither spade nor shovel.

The corpse is placed in the hole with nothing more over it than the clothing worn during life. And the belongings are not buried. Once again I must admit neglect to makes inquiries. It would seem to be reasonable, however, to suppose that the placing of the belongings with the corpse on the barbecues was in order that, if the corpse revived, necessary weapons and utensils would be at hand. The possibility of revival of a corpse buried without any shell in Mother Earth, and the consequent need of weapons, does not exist.

I found that while diseases are dreaded—it is probably the accompanying pain which is feared—there is no fear of death.

Life's greatest adventure they have learned to face with equanimity.

CHAPTER XXI

CHILDREN'S GAMES & OCCUPATIONS

MAWKEN children know nothing of school terms and holidays, or separate periods of time set apart for learning and for playing respectively. Having no writing and no books in use, they cannot grind at reading, writing and arithmetic. Their school is the school of observation. Each Mawken boy and each Mawken girl has to be a little pioneer. This is why they are such serious little people, although, as we shall discover, *la joie de vivre* is theirs equally with other children in the world. While many of their common experiences and hardships would make the average child of civilised countries miserable, they grow up hardened to take things as they come, and they do so with remarkable and uncomplaining stoicism. There is one thing in particular which I have noticed about peoples brought up in this way: they learn to use their language accurately. While pronunciation may be indistinct and, in some cases, even wrong, I have not come across a single sentence in which words were given a wrong position. To give a simple illustration: a Mawken child would not make the mistake of saying: "I only caught one fish." He would, with unhesitating accuracy, say: "I caught one fish only."

Much of the children's "play" consists of learning to

A Group of Sea Gypsies.

Types of faces.

Much of the children's "play" consists of learning to use the things which their elders employ in the routine of daily life. There is a real pleasure in *doing* things. We know that this is natural to most children; but we are now learning that the savage races, unspoiled by the conventionalities of civilised life, have retained these pleasures which we ourselves have, to a great extent, lost.

But little thought is needed to enable us to realise that people living such hunting and hunted lives cannot waste much time on those occupations dissociated from necessary work which we regard as the pleasures of life. Yet there is a strong sense of humour even amongst the adults; and whenever I associated with Mawken who for the time being were care-free, this sense was allowed full play. It was especially so with the children. Some charming scenes stand out in vivid colouring in my recollection.

During the prolonged cruise of the Archipelago, when the glorious weather of the north-east monsoon prevailed, when the seas were safe for Mawken *kabang* and *chapăn*, when there was no need to be apprehensive about the weather, I happened upon a Mawken camp. It was a camp made for purposes of boat-building, and it was situated on the southernmost point of Domel Island. I had accomplished all the recording I intended to do that day, and we aboard the launch were on the look-out for a pleasant spot in which to bivouac. The sea was beautifully calm and the snow-white launch, built to graceful lines, must have made a

pleasing sight as it threw up the blue sea into a white foam at its bows. There was an air of serenity about everything. We were coming up to Domel Island from the south, and as we found a little island abeam of us to port, Nbai suggested that we should turn and run in between it and the larger island of Domel. Accordingly the *serang* was asked to make for the passage, and we soon found ourselves in a most exquisite bay, the southern bend of which was completely hidden from the view of persons passing up or down the outer sea. The island was well mantled with the green of jungle, in a freshness of shades unspoiled by the dust of roads. The golden sands, in a sweeping arc, sloped easily down from the edge of the green to the ripples of the blue. The water of the bay was clear and of a lovely colour. In the sky overhead not a fleck of cloud could be seen. A delightful place and ideal conditions for a picnic, and before us was a picnic party!

Several Mawken *kabang* were drawn up on the sands, not in line, but in irregular picturesqueness. A little away from them was the larger boat, of different build, of a Chinese trader. It transpired that this man had taken to himself a wife from amongst the Mawken, and her relatives and some friends of the family had gathered round, seeking such protection as the Chinaman could render, while diving for him, scraping up sea-slugs and collecting edible birds'-nests. (By the way, I was subsequently informed that he had three large balls of opium in his possession.)

We had camped a little earlier than usual, as it was a Saturday and I wanted a comfortable place in which to spend Sunday. As it was about tea-time when we dropped anchor, I partook of tea on board and went ashore afterwards. It was not long before I found myself seated on a convenient log chatting with such of the Mawken as gathered round. As usual, my knowledge of their language was a ready introduction. The children were at first a little curious and not a little shy of me. It did not take long, however, to assure them that I was no ogre and not even a kill-joy, and, being set at ease, they ran off to play. This was exactly one of those experiences I greatly valued, and such a natural demonstration was much more enjoyable than would have been the worming out of information by means of numerous questionings. The Mawken names of three of these games I find recorded in my notes—*jubi*, *pachaw*, *nyelu*.

Jubi is, I think, the name given to a game somewhat similar to tiggy-tiggy-touch-wood. It can be played by any number of children, and it requires no equipment. One child consented to be the starter, and immediately this was arranged all the others scattered from him and bobbed about like jumping beans. The starter made a dash in an effort to touch one of these others. He failed, as the other child sprang quickly aside and ran off. Then the starter made a wild rush at another child, only to meet with similar failure. After many tries he succeeded in touching one of the

other children, who then took his place, and started off to touch someone else. The children—girls as well as boys—were very game, and persisted bravely with their twistings and dodgings and spurts. Evidently the game had been played before on those sands, as I had not seen any previous consultation or arrangements for recognised sanctuaries. Sanctuary did not consist in touching wood. The sanctuaries were places selected, as we select stops in the game of rounders. The Mawken children showed almost a scorn of sanctuary, and sought it only when the game had been too fast and furious, and a panting player needed a little rest in order to recover his breath. It was a pretty sight to watch their lithe brown bodies bending and darting about over the golden sands, and it was a pleasant sound to hear the peals of children's laughter breaking the stillness of the air.

An even more interesting game was that which I saw being played a little later on by half-a-dozen children who still had some "go" left. My curiosity was aroused by observing a girl select a smooth expanse of sand and clear it of obstructions, such as bits of loose wood. This done, the girl picked up a piece of stick and proceeded to trace a circle in the sand. The circle was probably two feet six inches in diameter. Having finished the circle, she drew a line away from one side of it to a distance of about ten feet. Other children joined her, and they drew other lines of similar length. In all, eight such lines, or radii, were drawn. They were not

equidistant from one another, as are the spokes in a cart-wheel. Instead of this they were more in pairs, like the eight legs of a spider, rather splayed. Having completed these radii, the girl who began the drawing took up her position within the circle, and she called to the other girls and boys to take up their positions for the game which was to follow. Each of these other children was stationed at the terminus of one of the lines, and as there were six children, three of the termini were left unoccupied. The name of this game was given to me as *pachaw*. I find it more convenient to write of it as if it were a game of spider-and-fly, which it was really supposed to represent. The play began by the spider rushing out of her parlour (the circle) in an attempt to reach one of the vacant termini. She must be foiled in this attempt by a fly dashing to occupy the position before she could reach it. The first attempt failed. The spider then ran back up the line and stood in the circle, turning round, and occasionally feinting to start off down another line. Presently another dash was made. This time the fly was beaten, with the result that "fly" became converted into "spider." In this game there was no collision between fly and fly, as the running was always with the sun; so that when the spider dashed down a vacant line the duty of blocking up that particular terminus devolved upon the fly at the end of the line next to it, who in running forward would travel with the sun. The spider was not allowed to make short cuts. Failing to reach a terminus first,

the spider had to return to the parlour along the line down which he or she had run. Many were the shouts of laughter as the spider was foiled over and over again in attempts to convert fly into spider. The Mawken children played this game, as they did all other games, with a joyful abandonment.

To my mind it is a happy adaptation from a study of natural history—the study of the spider and its web. Perhaps it was taken from that species of spider which one often saw in Burma—a species which, when weaving its web, makes four sets of treble lines, as part of the pattern, well marked. The spider then takes its place in the centre of the round web, and extends its legs in pairs, each pair resting along the spaces in each set of triple webbing. As this design is extended to the circumference, it is an aid to the spider in the great art of camouflage. It occurs to me that did the children of England know of this game of *pachaw*, as played by the brown children of the Mergui Archipelago, they would find in it a delightful addition to the games of the sea-side, to which they are accustomed to flock during our summer months.

Nyelu was a game I did not see; nor did I learn how it is played. And my opportunities for study came to an end before I had exhausted my inquiries upon this and other subjects.

Opportunities for set games, such as those described, are rare, and for the most part children are occupied in making themselves useful. The search for food is an

ever-present necessity, and when the tide ebbs the *kabang* may put in to a rock-bordered island and boys and girls will scramble about the boulders in search of limpets. Some strength of fingers is required to detach these limpets from the rocks to which they firmly adhere. The children learn to become adepts at it, and soon collect a good boiling.

While searching for limpets a look-out must be kept for crabs, which, in some places, are very numerous. Even the small crabs are not despised. I know from experience that these searches are not all fun. Rocks are sharp and many are barnacled, and walking over them unshod one's feet have been lacerated. On the larger islands, where monkeys abound, the children have to dispossess the monkeys of their hunting-grounds before they can get to work. There is no need for a fight, as the monkeys run off, though under protest, when the children approach them.

When crabs and limpets have been collected, some of the children will take the cooking-pots to a spring and fill them with water in readiness for the cooking; or if there be no spring they will search the shore for a likely place, scrutinising the sand for signs of a subterranean flow of water, and scratching a hole at the foot of an embedded boulder, dip out the water which wells up into the basin thus formed. Next there will have to be an excursion into the jungle to collect dry boughs and branches which have rotted and been blown off from the trees during the hurricane season.

If the elders happen to be collecting boulders, the children will assist them by carrying the smaller stones, helping to load the *kabang* with such a cargo of dead-weight as it will safely carry. And when a move has to be made the children are the ones who take the oars and speed the *kabang* on its way. No one teaches them how to handle an oar, and on no occasion have I seen Mawken children pull to stroke.

Children will help to collect the material for mat-making, and the girls will learn to do this work by observing their elders. Before mat-making is begun in earnest the little girls will pick up some of the stuff and "play" at this work, squatting beside and closely watching some older person who knows how it is done. There is not the slightest attempt at showing, nor is there any such procedure as setting the children a task. The children, being observant, see those things which need doing, and take their part in the doing of them without admonitions. The presence of older people makes no difference whatever in their conduct and games and occupations. During all the time I was with them I did not hear a single "Don't," and on the rare occasions when it was necessary "*Amon ha!*" ("Not good!") was sufficient warning.

Speaking generally, it is not possible to pick out occupations as being particularly those of children. So completely do they share the life of the adults that a line cannot be drawn.

CHAPTER XXII

HOW THE WOMEN LIVE

WHEN one bears in mind that the *kabang* is the home, questions which would occur to one to ask with regard to the life of woman, ordinarily situated, are immediately recognised as futile. It might be correct to say that the women's chief work is the bearing of children. Yet people have to eat and sleep, and provision for these things must be made.

The only piece of furniture which a Mawken requires is a mat upon which to sleep. Although this class of work is not everywhere in the world delegated to them, yet amongst the Mawken the plaiting of these mats is definitely the work of the women. The cutting of the palms is not the work of the women; but when the palms are cut they unleaf and peel them, shape the ribbons and place them to soak. After this the ribbons are spread in the sunshine, by means of which they are thoroughly dried and bleached. Sometimes the actual plaiting will be done in the *kabang*. At other times it will be done on the sands of some island, under the shadow of the trees, or in the shade of the roof of the *kabang*, removed from the ridge-pole and set down upon the shore. These mats are made in two sizes, one for the young people and the other for the adults.

The larger ones are an arm's-stretch. The Mawken have discovered that the mats made as long as the distance between the finger-tips when both arms are stretched out, one on either side of the body, are of sufficient length for the body from head to feet. The shorter mats are equal in length to the distance from the left shoulder to the finger-tips of the right hand of that arm when extended. The mats used for sleeping are very soft, and even if crumpled in the hand will not crack. Some are finished off at the ends with ornamental lacings of narrow ribbons, while others have similar lacings with broad ribbons. These endings are strongly finished off, but frequently the corners are not evenly done, perhaps on account of their often being finished hastily. Some coarser, harder mats are made and are used for coverings, being laid upon the bamboo deck under the shelter of the *kabang*, the sleeping-mats being rolled out upon these coarser mats at night and rolled up and put away by day. Some Mawken do not take the trouble to put the sleeping-mats away at all. The various kinds of mats are used also for barter by the Malay and Chinese traders, who, roaming the Archipelago, will collect such articles for sale at Mergui, Bokpyin or Victoria Point, and will pay the Mawken in rice or cloth.

In this mat-making are the possibilities of a developed and remunerative industry which might become the means of improving the conditions of life of these Sea Gypsies.

During one of my quarterly trips from Rangoon to Mergui, on that part of the run between Tavoy and Mergui, I found myself as fellow-passenger with the then Director of Commercial Intelligence of the Indian Empire. Nbai and the two boys were aboard the steamer with me, and as usual I was frequently in converse with them. The Director of Commercial Intelligence became interested enough to ask me who they were, and upon my telling him he at once began to question me with regard to their technology, and the possibilities of developing industries which might supply Indian and European markets. I told him of the mat-making, and he asked to see a mat; so I called Nbai and instructed him to bring up his sleeping-mat, which he had with him on the lower deck. The uneven finish was commented upon as a fault which could easily be remedied; and then the Director suggested that the Mawken might be shown how to make fish-bags, which could easily be placed upon European markets. It would be necessary to install hydraulic plant, and to pack the bags under hydraulic pressure. The demand for such bags was, he informed me, almost unlimited.

The sun-drying of food is another occupation of the women-folk. When there has been a *nga-u* hunt, and one of these large fish has been speared and drawn ashore, the flesh is apportioned amongst the boats which took part in the chase. Some of this flesh the women will cook, with little or no delay. The

remainder they will fillet, cut into strips and spread in the sunshine to dry. Usually this flesh is spread upon the shelter of the *kabang*; and if the boat has to make a hasty departure no time is lost in collecting the fish.

Another article of diet which is sun-dried is the pawpaw. Only those few of the Mawken who seek the protection of the traders, or other Burmese, Malay or Chinese settlers, grow the pawpaw themselves. The others procure the fruit by barter or in the bazaars of Mergui. It is cut open, the little black seeds are cleaned out and the pawpaw is cut into strips, which, like the fish, are spread upon the roof of the *kabang*. Dried in this way, pawpaw will keep for a long while. Sometimes the smaller varieties of bananas are peeled, sliced and treated in the same way. "Lady's-fingers," the smallest of the bananas, can be peeled and dried whole. They have a flavour not unlike that of preserved figs. Barter has enabled all the Mawken to become possessed of knives and dahs, and the slicing of fish or fruit is an easy matter. Barter, too, has brought to very many of the hearths the iron skillet to replace the earthen pot. Pottery, the making of which is women's work, is likely to become extinct as a Mawken art. Such earthen pots as I have seen were of a dark colour, almost black, of simple, utilitarian design, and wholly without decoration. They are brittle things, and the Mawken boat-wives must be very gratified when they have succeeded in procuring

an iron pot, which will the better stand the bouncings received by the *kabang* during rough weather.

Aided by the children, the women get the water for drinking and cooking, and usually collect the wood for the fire. When the family is feeding, all eat together, helping themselves out of the one pot. Any who may possess enamelled plates will use them, and others may sometimes make use of the large leaves of an epiphyte. "Fingers were made before forks," and the Mawken do not despise them.

Mothers must feed their offspring themselves, or, if they are unable to do so, which is very unusual, get other women to come to the rescue. There are no dairies, and their manner of life prevents their keeping cows and goats. Even could they procure it, they would be unable to afford tinned milk. Mawken mothers carry their children even after they can walk. In the *kabang* it is much safer to do so than to leave the toddler to his or her own devices. The arm is relieved of some of the weight of the child's body by the simple device of using a sling of cloth. This passes over the right shoulder and under the left arm. The child sits in the sling with its legs astride the mother's body, one leg passing in front and the other behind. While going about their everyday duties the children are not put down, the mothers having become so accustomed to carrying their children in this way that they seem to be almost unaware of the burden. They will sleep with the little ones still slung to them, taking

care, of course, that neither of the legs is crushed beneath their body. No pillows are used. Mawken men and women, if they want their heads raised, just double one arm underneath and lie upon that. It is usual to sleep in the boat, even when there is a temporary camp on an island; it is their home for work and play during the daytime. The only exception to this rule is in the case of those Mawken who happen to have shelters raised on sticks, which are scarcely worthy of the name "huts." The Mawken take as few risks as possible, and are ready to push off their *kabang* and to hurry away at very short notice.

In the morning there are no carpets to be swept and floors to be polished. The deck mat is brushed with the hand, with a few twigs, or with a grip of grass upon occasion, nothing in the way of a broom or a whisk being made by the Mawken. Perhaps in course of time visits to Mergui, on the part of some, will lead to their purchasing the Indian whisks, made of rice-straw, and sold in the bazaars at two for one anna two pice (three halfpence). Until then such of the Mawken women who have fits of tidiness must do as I have described. I am reminded of a certain visit to the Malay-Mawken settlement at the south of Kissering Island. I had been doctoring two or three children for constipation, biliousness and low fever, together with usual cases of skin disease, and having done this, I lingered to talk about things in general. It would have been useless to inform them at that stage that

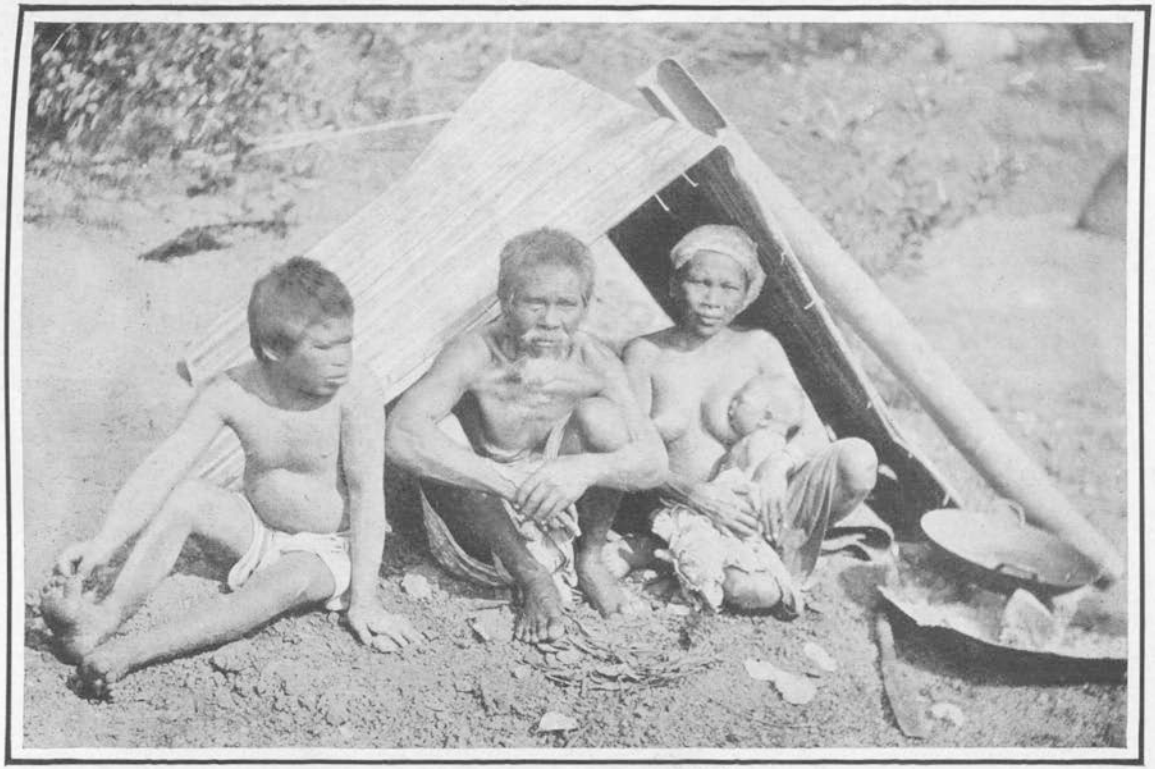
"cleanliness is next to goodliness" (I must ignore the "authority" of a mistranslation); but it was not too premature to dissertate upon the ill effects of dirt and garbage breeding flies and giving forth unsavoury odours; and it was decidedly opportune to draw attention to the condition of the ground round about those huts. There were various exclamations, punctuating my remarks, such as "*Amon!*" ("Good!") and "*Tawkaw!*" ("Truly!"); and one young woman was so inspired that she went in search of a paddle, and taking one from a *kabang* drawn up on the sands, proceeded with much vigour and but little effect to "sweep" up the rubbish lying about. If seed had fallen upon really good ground, I may hope that it would not be many days before she invented a more effective broom, made, perhaps, of leafy branches bound together. The making of brooms and besoms should be quite a novel and entertaining occupation for the Mawken women. It would certainly be a change from the monotonous routine of many generations.

References have been made to the diving for green-snail. These are of large size, either spiral or dome-shaped. The shells are of mother-of-pearl substance, and find a ready market for button-making and other such purposes. When they are brought up from the floor of the ocean they are handed over to the women, who prepare a pot, or even, it may be, a cauldron of water, and boil them. The fish within is boiled out, and after being sun-dried it becomes a marketable

commodity. The Chinese readily buy these things, as well as the sun-dried sea-slugs.

Mawken women are not troubled with a coiffure. They do not, like the islanders of the Pacific, need to sleep with their necks upon a wooden stand in order to preserve the arrangement of the hair. The girls leave their hair hanging down. As they have no brushes, it is never brushed, and most of them know nothing of combs. The women twist up their hair in an untidy knot behind, tucking the ends in to keep the bob in position. It is not usually let down when they are bathing in the sea. If women thus neglect their glory there need be no surprise that they are shorn of much of their beauty. When the Mawken women make the acquaintance of hair powders for washing their heads, and learn to use combs and to brush out the hair thoroughly, a transformation scene will take place which will surprise them even more than others. Our nurses who are inspectors of schools would have a busy time amongst the Mawken children *and* their parents.

While the Burmese women delight in the use of flowers to adorn their hair, the Mawken make no attempt at adornment. True, I have seen one old Mawken woman wearing a back comb, similar to that worn by Chinese women, but as she was the spouse of a Chinaman it is easy to account for this oddity. Neither do the Mawken women take pains to adorn the body. Sometimes one may see a young girl wearing a necklace made of coloured seeds of flowering



A Beach Shelter.

The roof on the *Kabang* can be readily removed and used as a shelter on land. A bamboo water-holder is leaning against the side.

trees and climbing plants. When they are married these are dispensed with, or the baby makes the wearing of necklaces impracticable. Some few of the women wear beads which are made from a black, calcareous growth taken from the ocean. This growth is like a leafless stem. It is scraped of its outer roughness and reveals a highly polished surface. These "stems" are broken into convenient sections of the size of which the beads are to be, and each piece is carefully bored. Such beads are strung into necklaces on threads of twisted fibres. A few of the women would seem to regard them as mascots. There is no prevailing belief in their efficacy. The boring of the beads is done with a hard and pointed fish-bone when a drill of metal cannot be had for the purpose. Care has to be taken in the boring or the piece will be splintered. Owing to the roving life cotton is not grown for cloth, and the art of weaving, if known in the dim past, is not practised. This places the Mawken at a further disadvantage, as they cannot make their own dress material, and their state of poverty is such that they cannot manage to keep even a change of skirt which shall be respectable. Such bits of clothing as they procure are worn to rags. I did not see one such bit of clothing which had the appearance of being clean.

Under the head of this chapter I must include the dances. The reason for this will become obvious.

Once again I was encamped with a party of Mawken

on one of the islands. I had finished my dinner on the launch, and the Mawken had cooked and consumed their last meal for the day. I went ashore and joined a small party around a camp-fire. The moon was well up and was shedding its soft silver light over water, trees and sands. The wood of the camp-fire was green and in the burning it gave out a pleasant aroma. Conversation turned upon the lighter side of Mawken life, and I sought information about songs and dances and musical instruments. As upon other occasions, I was told: "These are the days of sadness. Mawken people seldom dance and play now. We do not make the musical instruments as in the long ago." I asked to be allowed to see what the dances were like, explaining that I had never seen a Mawken dance. After a good deal of coaxing by their elders some girls and boys were persuaded to come forward into the firelight and to give an exhibition of their dancing. The clinching argument had been to the effect that I had given the Mawken medicine and had been kind to them, and now my request should be granted. It was an appeal to clan gratitude, and it was not in vain. The children formed into an irregular group and went through various contortions of the body, pacing forwards and backwards the while. While this was going on a conversation had been taking place near by which resulted in two of the women stepping forward and letting down their tresses. Loosening the skirt from the waist and drawing it up and hitching it under the

arm-pits, so as to cover the body from the arm-pits to the knees, they prepared for action. The children dispersed and sat about amongst the spectators. Standing side by side, the women raised both hands aloft and began to do step-work with the feet and finger-work with the hands. Being suddenly seized with shyness, they hid their faces in their hands and ran away into the shadows of the jungle. There were loud and insistent calls for their return. After a time they came back into the fire-light, and with shy shruggings of the shoulders they began again. I do not know how to describe the dance so as to enable readers to make a mental picture of it. There was a great deal of foot-work, consisting of steps forwards and backwards and to either side. The body was frequently raised on the toes and lowered again. And all was done to perfect rhythm, in four-time. While this foot-work was taking place, there was body-bending and body-swaying, working from the waist. Shoulders, elbows and wrists, all were brought into the movement, and the fingers were never idle. More complicated exercise in a course of physical culture can scarcely be imagined. It was simple, graceful and modest. The dance by these two women continued at intervals until they were tired out. The men took no part in the movements.

There was the band! It was an improvised one, the players being men. The chief performer was the drummer of the empty kerosene tin, borrowed from the Chinaman, who used it as a receptacle for holding

water. The drummer succeeded in making a considerable noise. The noise did not matter: it was the rhythm which was of importance. Another man manipulated two pieces of flat wood, which served as "bones" or as castanets. They produced a not unpleasant clacking. And there was the bamboo horn. All of these sounds were subdued and harmonised in a humming of human voices, in *crescendo* and *diminuendo*. The general effect was pleasing, and the spirit of the whole movement influenced and swayed the emotional part of one's nature.

The Mawken explained that they had other dances, in which women only took part. These I had no opportunity of seeing, nor were they described to me.

It is pleasant to think that in the life of the women there is meant to be a place for recreation.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE LIFE OF THE MEN

FOR the most part, the work of the men is done in the water. Such things as boat-building and hunting must, of necessity, take place upon land. It is not given to many Europeans to see the Mawken at work; for those of the Mawken who do overcome their dread of other peoples, and venture to pay periodic visits to the ports, come there for the purpose of barter, to secure food and clothing, while those of the Mawken who shun the ports and remain about the more distant islands of the Archipelago get away and hide when they espy launches or other boats of strangers. I was privileged to see the Mawken both at work and at play.

In my description of the life of the women it was necessary to include a reference to the men, because, while the women do the dancing, the men make up the band, and they are the ones who make the musical instruments, whenever such are made. One of these musical instruments is the drum, which would seem to be ubiquitous the world over. To make this drum the man will cut a log from a tree which has been felled. He will select a tree of comparatively soft, light wood. Having cut out his log, he will sit down and bark it. He will then lift it over a fire, on a tripod of stones,

and burn the middle. Next he will take a hard, sharp fish-bone, something like a paper-knife, with a good edge and point, and gouge out the charred part. Or he will use a punch of shaped and sharpened rock. In these days, when steel and iron may be procured from the mainland, he may employ a metal gouge. By repeated processes of burning and punching the log is at length hollowed out. The man will go on scraping it inside until he has made the wall of the thickness he deems to be suitable. The man will not, of course, essay to make a drum unless he has previously been able to secure a deer or a wild pig in the chase, or has killed a tiger. He hunts solely for food, and the drum is simply the utilisation of that which would be otherwise a waste product. The skin is taken by the man and scraped clean of all hair and membranes until he has made of it a coarse parchment. This he takes to the edge of the sea, scrapes out a hole in the sand into which water quickly flows, and places the parchment to soak. When it is sufficiently soaked he cuts with a knife two pieces of required size, draws them over each end of the wooden body and secures them with grass cordage and supple twigs. The drum is placed to dry, not in too great heat, which might split the body; and in the process of drying the skin would be drawn taut, and the man's work would be completed by the sun.

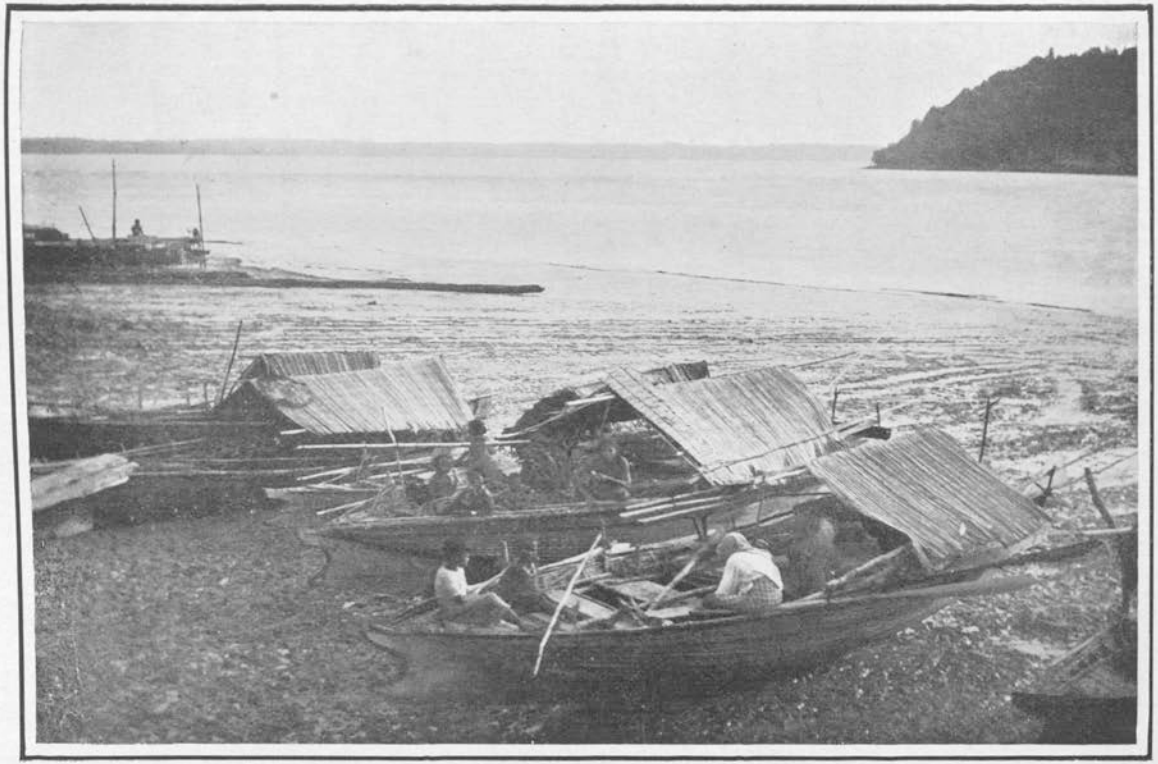
To be able to possess a skin which can be utilised for the making of a drum there must have been a successful

hunt. Even given good dogs, which have been taught to hunt by being left upon an island to fend for themselves, it is not an easy thing to hit a fleet deer, as it dashes past, with nothing better than a spear. The Mawken have no other hunting weapon, so far as my knowledge goes. I did not see nor hear of one of them possessing a gun. The Mawken would come under the Government Regulations which prohibit the possession of fire-arms by the peoples of the country, in the administered districts, unless they were in military or police service, or had secured special permission. The use of bows and arrows, as I have previously mentioned, does not seem to have occurred to the Sea Gypsies. The drums are exceedingly rare, and some of the men do not even know how to set about making them.

Clearing of the primeval jungle has taken place, in patches, on some of the islands, and in this secondary growth the Giant Bamboo may be found. While it is not the case that bamboo always grows where virgin forest has been cut, it is true that bamboo appears only amongst secondary growth. Like the graceful crowns of palm-trees of various kinds, the bamboo is one of the distinguishing features of tropical landscape. The Giant Bamboo, which may have stems from twenty to thirty feet long, are of much use to the Mawken; but, as it occurs in only a few places, the men have to search for it. Perhaps it may be true to say that the Mawken know exactly where to search, as they have

explored the islands throughout. When a water-storer is needed, a man will go in search of one of the clumps of Giant Bamboo and cut one of the pieces with the greatest diameter. From this he will remove all leaves, and will carefully "ring" a section of about six or seven feet in length. He will break off the unrequired ends carefully, so as not to split the piece he wants to use; and he will, as carefully, punch out all the nodes except the last one, which is left to form the bottom of the bucket. He then cuts away a half-section of the top internode, so as to form a spout, or chute, for pouring out the water; and he has a receptacle for use which will contain about a gallon of fresh water. As he does not think of making a bung for it, though he might go so far as stuffing in a handful of leaves, the bamboo must be stood in a perpendicular position when containing water. Such bamboo water-holders are seldom seen, as it is customary to keep a supply of drinking-water in the cooking-pot when there is any intention of not visiting a fresh-water-bearing island for any length of time.

The smaller bamboos are utilised for flute-making. The man cuts a piece about fifteen inches long and punches out all the nodes save the top one. He cuts a hole near the top, across which to blow so as to produce a sound, and the flute is finished. There seems to be no idea of stops. The Mawken flute is the primitive "very first flute of all." It is possible to inquire of the occupants of a hundred *kabang* without



HARBOUR AND ISLANDS.

Kabang are beached on the mud in the foreground; the islands lie beyond.

meeting with a single possessor of a flute in these days; for "these are the days of sadness," and the men are seldom occupied in the making of musical instruments.

Two pieces of smoothed wood serve for clappers, and the making of these needs no description. Having no metals, the Mawken are limited in the number of their musical instruments; and I could obtain no information whatever about stringed instruments. It would seem that they are not to be found at all.

Mention has been made of one use to which the Giant Bamboo is sometimes put. Its chief use is for the decking of the *kabang*. With the aid of dahs, now easily procured by barter, the cutting down of numbers of stems is an easy task, though care must be taken to avoid snakes, which delight to make bamboo clumps their habitat. A party of men and boys will enter a bamboo jungle and in a comparatively short time return to the shore dragging a good supply of stems. Squatting on the sands, they will set to work to split and to cut them to length; and when the *kabang* is ready for decking the men and boys will soon have the bamboos placed in position and lashed to the bars already fixed athwart the ship. This bamboo forms a very light deck, or staging, and so adds but little to the weight of the ship. Often it is placed in position when green; and as it shrinks considerably in the process of drying, the decks allow of a good deal of ventilation. It is well that the evil-

smelling slush usually to be found in the bilge of the *kabang* should not be bottled up. The men's most arduous work is, undoubtedly, the building of the *kabang*. To begin with, they have to go to one of the larger islands where they can find not only the hard, durable wood of a tree of sufficient height and diameter, but also make a camp, well hidden from boats passing up and down through the islands. To fell one of these hardwood trees is no light task. When it is accomplished, a straight length of twenty, twenty-five or thirty feet is cut out, which the men haul to a clearing and set up upon logs. Beneath it they light fires, and keep them burning, without allowing them to flare too much. When the wood is burned enough, it is turned over, and the men set to work upon it with axes or hatchets and hew out the charred portion. I should have mentioned that all the outer bark is peeled off before the burning is begun. Several times the wood will be turned over and burned, and re-turned and hollowed out. All trace of charring is eventually removed. The keel, for such it is to be, is weighted in the middle and warped, so that the bows and stern curve upwards. After this the men hack out the scalloped "gangways" fore and aft, and the work on the keel is complete. The next thing to do is to make an expedition to an island upon which may be found growing some of the palms the stems of which are needed for building up the sides of the ship. These are prickly things and have to be handled

with respect. The collectors remove the leafy parts, load a full cargo and return to the "ship-yard." There the work of removing the bark and the spines proceeds. No time is wasted when the work of *kabang*-building is begun, as it is slow work at the best. That is a special reason why the Mawken select for their camp and ship-yard an island which has a secret bay, where, free from molestation, the summer camp may be a very pleasant thing. Although the *kabang*, when completed, will be the property of one man, the primitive co-operative principle which is adopted by such peoples allows that the eventual owner shall be assisted by other men. Perhaps he has done a like service himself; if not, he will be prepared to pay the debt in service at some future time. In those cases in which a man's *kabang* is worn out and one of his married sons is setting up house for himself, with the intention of giving his father a roof over his head, the old man will readily assist in the work. And should there be any unmarried brothers, who also will share the *kabang*, there is no difficulty whatever in securing such co-operative effort. It is unnecessary to describe how the crooks are driven into the keel, how the palm stems are built up to form the walls of the ship, and how the men apply the caulking of resinous matter with their fingers. An interesting part of the work, even to them, must always be the laying of the rib of Giant Bamboo, one on either side of the *kabang*, at about nine inches from the sill of the

gunwale, to perpetuate their sad history in the structure of their home. I do not think that it suggests sadness to them. Rather it has come to be regarded, as some ancients regarded the rainbow, as a symbol of safety or deliverance.

At the close of a hard day's work, hacking at the hardwood, or droughing and preparing the stems of palms, the men will file down to the sea and cool, refresh and disport themselves in the water. They are as fond of a frolic in the sea as are any English schoolboys. They thoroughly enjoy play after their work, when it is possible to have play.

It may be of interest to mention that the Mawken drink water only. They make no intoxicating beverages, and they have no such stimulants as tea and coffee. Cocoa also is unknown to them. I am writing of the Mawken generally, of course. Some of the visitors to Mergui and Victoria Point, as well as those Mawken who company with the Chinese traders, will have been introduced to these things, and it is not unlikely that in course of time, unless the selling of intoxicants to them is prohibited, they will be induced to become frequenters of the toddy-shops.

With some of the Mawken it has become a common task to go out into the islands and to bring in ship-loads of bark to Mergui for tanning. They have been shown which barks are required, and the men will work diligently blazing it off, loading, transporting and unloading it. During the showery seasons the

work is rendered uncomfortable, owing to the presence of multitudes of leeches, which affix themselves to the men's scantily clad bodies and drink their blood with gusto.

Another work which occupies a considerable portion of the men's time is the making of the different kinds of spears required for harpooning and for hunting. The first step is to go into the jungle and to select saplings of hardwood with straight stems. The men will disbranch them on the spot, and bring them out to a clearing to peel and cut them to lengths of about six feet. When the harpoon is to be made, the butt end of the shaft is ringed, or grooved, to enable a cord to be affixed to it without slipping off. The spear-heads may be of hard fish-bones; but nearly all spear-heads now are of iron or steel. It is possible to secure a piece of a broken dah, or to get a bit of hoop-iron from one of the go-downs where bales of rice-bags are unpacked. The men laboriously grind the metal to shape by rubbing it upon a piece of hard rock. The head of the harpoon is made with one barb, or with two barbs, as is thought well. It is driven firmly into the end of the shaft and bound there. Files are very rare, and the tedious work of grinding the metal to shape will occupy parts of several days. If a head be lost or broken, it does not become a matter of spending another sixpence or a shilling; it is a matter of another quest for a piece of metal, and the prolonged effort of fashioning it as required. Sometimes it may be

necessary to dive for shell, which can be bartered for the metal. The oft-recurring need of tedious work of this kind is easily overlooked by Westerners, who see but the simple and limited stock-in-trade of such people as the Mawken. Westerners who know no more, who do not see the Mawken at work, and who do not use their imagination, may easily be tempted to condemn these people offhand as a lazy lot. The spear used in the hunt has a diamond-shaped head, and it can easily be withdrawn from the body of a deer or wild pig. Other spear-like weapons are made having two long points or prongs. They are useful in lifting fish out of the water, and they can be used for reaching down wild fruit from the trees of the jungle.

I do not think that there is need to do more than to make mention of the manufacture of cordage, lanyards and cables, which gives the men a change of occupation. Some of these are made of grasses, others of lianas, and others, again, are of the inner bark of trees.

One of the most interesting pieces of work is that of the slug-rake. A straight sapling is selected for the handle, being cut to length and peeled. It is of light wood. A broad strip of wood is prepared, into which this handle is fixed; and the broad piece is held in position by two stays, forming a triangle with it as the base. At the apex of this triangle these stays are fastened to the handle. Into the broad strip, which is over four feet long and is fixed at right angles to the handle, long "teeth" of pointed bamboo are fastened.

Longitudinal strips of bamboo run the length of the rake, and are so fixed to cross-pieces that they form a pocket the whole length of the rake. Into this pocket the slugs slip when dislodged from the sand-banks by the teeth of the rake. The slugs partially bury themselves in the sand, and the rake catches the protruding part and so drags the creatures from their burrow. This rake is used in the shallower waters only.

Mention has been made of Nbai's going down to the floor of the ocean feet first. This is the method usually adopted when the men are diving for pearl oysters and sea-snails. If the water is not too deep the men will go right down in this way, and walk about the ocean floor, looking and feeling for their spoil. In deeper waters it may be necessary to turn and to descend head first, examining the floor and the submarine rocks, while the body is poised in the posture of an acrobat upon parallel bars. Care must be taken not to grip nor to tread upon sea-urchins. Crocodiles must be avoided, and the divers must ever be on the alert for sharks.

Upon one occasion I arrived, by launch, in the offing of a bay in which some Mawken were diving. The *kabang* were kept more or less stationary by means of the large stones which served for anchors. Even if this did not touch the bottom, it would prevent much movement. The work was proceeding quietly and without any excitement. The men just slipped over the bows of the *kabang*, and disappeared, feet first,

into the sea. When they had collected enough shells, or had been below as long as they could manage, they quietly came to the surface again. If they had shells, these were placed on the deck of the *kabang*. And frequently the men would climb the "gangway" and sit in the bows to recover breath. In one *kabang* a young fellow was lying prone upon the fore-deck. His ears, eyes and nose were bleeding profusely. It was explained to me that he had not been diving for some time and was out of practice. One's system has slowly to become inured to the deeper diving; and after a long break in this kind of work it is necessary to resume it gradually, just as in the case of a long fast the return to normal diet must be gradual. I knew of nothing which would afford him relief, and I could offer nothing but my commiserations. Maybe they were not altogether worthless.

I may conclude these remarks by making the reminder that, since the conditions of life of the Mawken are so unsettled and precarious, it is not to be wondered at that their occupations should be limited in number, if not in duration.

CHAPTER XXIV

PSYCHOLOGICAL PHENOMENA, OR HOW SUGGESTION WORKS

IT was customary for Nbai and the other Mawken who lived with me at Maulmein to accompany me on my trips to Mergui. By this means they kept in touch with their relatives and friends, and at Mergui they assisted me greatly in my further investigations. To see me in company with some of their own people, and on familiar terms with them, dispelled the fear of the others, who had not forgotten the days when Mawken visiting Mergui and going to draw water from the public wells were pelted with mud by the Burmese inhabitants of the town.

Upon the occasion of my last visit but one Nbai left me to pay a visit to his father-in-law, who usually roved about the more distant islands, in order to see how his other two boys were getting on. His trip occupied rather more time than I had anticipated, and I began to be concerned about him. On the morning of the day on which we were to catch the coasting steamer back to Maulmein Nbai turned up at the circuit house, and at once I noticed by the expression of his face that something was seriously amiss. It is not the custom of the Mawken to conceal their feelings, and their faces are sure indices of their state of mind.

"What is the matter, Nbai? Why do you look like that?" I inquired. And his first reply was a brief "*Manut amon ha!*" ("A man is not good!") "What man?" I then asked. "*Inglit? Tnow?*" ("English? Burman?") "*Ha, Mawken!*" ("No, Mawken!") he rejoined.

He explained that amongst these distant islands where his father-in-law lived there was a Mawken man who was addicted to evil practices, who terrorised and victimised his fellows, and did much harm. He said that the Mawken there were much agitated; but they could not free themselves from the cruel tyrant, because wherever they went he followed. Amongst the victims of this man who was working bad works was the father-in-law of Nbai. He, Nbai, was afraid lest his father-in-law should be killed and his two little boys left without a guardian. I tried to learn what was the nature of the happenings which produced such disturbing effects, but all that I could gather was that the wicked man stole things and killed people. Nbai was so concerned that he decided not to return to Maulmein with me, and gave me clearly to understand this. I tried to dissuade him at first, urging that perhaps after all he was mistaken in thinking that any harm would befall his father-in-law; then when I saw that there was something more serious than I was able to comprehend, I bowed to the inevitable and acquiesced, obtaining an assurance that Nbai would find out from Mr Walkem the day of my next visit to Mergui, and

would come to see me. I was resigning myself with some composure to the situation when Nbai made the disturbing remark: "If he kills my father-in-law, I shall kill him." It had so happened that, quite recently, I had presented Nbai with a new, well-sharpened dah, and he was thus provided with a very effective weapon for his purpose.

I called Nbai aside, out of earshot of others, and quietly reasoned with him, reminding him of the teaching he had received from me, and showing him that, although the man's doings were wrong, yet, if he carried out his expressed intention, there would be two bad men instead of one. He hung his head and listened patiently, and acknowledged the truth of the statement that two wrongs cannot make one right. He made no promise, however, and I was careful not to attempt to extract one from him. I knew that if his conscience accepted the truth he would follow its dictates. It would be, from the psychological viewpoint, a case of self-discipline, instead of a discipline imposed from without by the extraction of a promise. I confess that I was not sure of the course he would decide to take, and I let him go, not without some qualms, hoping for the best.

It is not well here to go into fuller details.

I took particular care to notify Mr Walkem of the date of my next visit to Mergui, and I was somewhat chagrined at not finding Nbai awaiting my landing on the steamer jetty. I was even more concerned

upon reaching the circuit house to find he was not waiting for me there, and had not put in an appearance at all.

My luggage was brought up, my unpacking was done, and my Tamil boy prepared and brought me breakfast. The *Hindu* had run in early, and we were able to land immediately after *chota hazri.*

It was just as I had finished my repast that Nbai came up into the verandah. He came very quietly, and there was a serious, yet calm, expression on his face.

"Well, Nbai," I said, "what about your father-in-law?"

"*Matai ka* " ("Is dead"), he replied.

"What did you do?"

"Here," he replied, at the same time handing me a "curiosity" which I treasure to this day.

It is a bag of plaited palm-leaf. The leaf has been soaked in water for days, then sun-dried and beaten, and cut into strips of the right width, which is about one-fifth of an inch. It is soft and pliable like a so-called "Panama." I say "so-called" because the Panama is made in Jamaica! The bag measures seven inches by five, being without box edges. The front is extended beyond the mouth when the bag is opened, and the extension folds down when it is closed. The back is also extended, and is of such a length that it can be folded over the front and form a wrapper. The bag is kept closed by means of a length of plaited inner bark of a tree.

Upon opening this interesting envelope I found a small bamboo phial measuring three and a half inches in length, with a diameter of an inch and a quarter. It is neatly fashioned, and the top pushes over the bottom after the manner of a pill-box. I found this to contain some maroon sand, which, to one who knows the Archipelago, tells its own tale. Besides the bamboo phial there are several twists of dirty rags, each twist containing about a small thimbleful of sand. I find that one of these has white sand, which also tells its tale. There is also a pair of jaws, cut off from the elongated fish which jumps along the surface of the water on its tail when disturbed. And perhaps most interesting of all is a little image, made of wax, representing a man, around which is wound a piece of string. The image measures two inches and a half.

Upon examining these contents of the bag my curiosity was, as anyone might suppose, keenly aroused. Whatever was the meaning of it all!

This is the explanation given by Nbai and afterwards corroborated by other Mawken.

The Wicked Man—I must call him that, as I do not know his name—lived by blackmail, or something akin to it. He did no work himself; but he went about amongst the people and demanded gifts of rice and fish, of shells and nests, of mats, or anything else he happened to desire. Not infrequently he succeeded in obtaining anything for which he cared to ask. Sometimes there was an attempt to resist his inordinate

and extortionate demands. When, for instance, the occupants of a *kabang* had just obtained a small supply of rice in exchange for hard-won spoils of the sea (oysters or slugs), and the Wicked Man demanded this rice, he would meet with a refusal. Or when the occupants of another *kabang* had worked hard, diving for oysters, scraping for slugs, or climbing dangerous rocks for nests, they were loath to hand these things over at the mere behest of the Wicked Man. Whenever such resistance to his demands was encountered he would wait his chance and, when it occurred, he would take his revenge.

Although the Mawken, as has been explained already, live in their *kabang*, it becomes necessary for them to land sometimes in order to obtain fresh water or to collect fire-wood. The Wicked Man (perhaps I should explain that this is how the Mawken alluded to him) would mark his victim, and when he stepped on to the sands he would follow and pick up some of the sand from the imprint of his foot. This sand he would wrap up in a twist of rag or paper, or deposit it in a bamboo phial. The idea being that if one takes sand from the imprint of the foot of another, the one who takes the sand—if he be possessed of "powers"—obtains an influence over the person from the imprint of whose foot the sand has been taken. In some cases the mere knowledge that the Wicked Man had done this would reduce the terrified victim to submission, and he would "hand over the swag." Some

Mawken ignored this preliminary action, and some were ignorant that it had taken place.

Having secured the necessary "control" by the taking up of the sand, the Wicked Man would then go in search of a hive of wild bees. Such hives may be found in the hollows of trees in the jungle which mantles most of the islands. If the tree could not be climbed it was cut down. The honey would, of course, be taken, it being regarded as a delicacy by all the Mawken. It was not, however, the honey that was being sought. It was the wax of the honey-comb. Some of this wax would be pressed and worked up into a ball, and into this ball of wax the sand taken from a footprint would be mixed. The wax would then be rolled out between the palms of the hands, broken into convenient lengths and modelled in the form of a man—head, body, arms and legs complete—like a "sexless" boy doll. The next step was for the Wicked Man to obtain a piece of string (sometimes to be found round packets of goods secured by barter in Mergui), or, failing that, some long grass, the pliable inner bark of a sapling, or the shreds of a garment. Anything which could be wound round the image representing the victim would do. Apparently women were never victimised. I could learn of no instance in which a woman had been singled out. The Wicked Man would return with the image and the winding, seek out his victim, and inform him that he was going to wind up his image, and that he would fall ill. The

image would then be taken to an island supposed to be the abode of a spirit who would do as requested. It was placed on the ground between two candles, also made of beeswax, and the request would be made to cause the victim to fall ill. The victim would fall ill, invariably, so far as my inquiries could ascertain. Sometimes, in order to enhance his reputation, and add to his powers of securing instant obedience to his demands, the Wicked Man would inform his victim that he was about to wind up the image from head to feet and he, the victim, should die. Invariably, so it appeared from evidence, the victim died.

The white sand in the twist of cloth is evidence that the Wicked Man had taken sand from a footprint on one of the distant islands in the north of the Archipelago; while the maroon sand was similar evidence of his having worked down to the south, in the neighbourhood of Victoria Point. And these samples of sand are corroborative evidence that his beat knew no bounds throughout the Archipelago!

Nbai's father-in-law had been one of the victims, and had died. There can scarcely be any need for me to explain that imagination (as distinct from fancy) is a great power in our life. And if superstition (an extravagant regard for the inexplicable and unknown) be allowed to act upon our fear, serious physical as well as mental results can be effected. We know how fear will cause a trembling of the legs and cold shivers down the back, and a blanching of the face. I doubt

if anyone who has had any Christian teaching whatever, even though he proclaim himself an atheist or an agnostic, is capable of the *intense* fear of people whose superstition is great because their ignorance is colossal. Such a fear, especially under the conditions of tropical living, does produce serious physical results. It induces a hopeless abandonment (against which, to give a classical instance, Mrs Dombey was urged to fight—though her abandonment was not superstitious, but a simple resignation). Doctors who have worked in India bear witness to the effect of this when an epidemic of cholera occurs. The people simply lie down and die. Intestinal and nervous disorders are also produced, and the victim sooner or later departs this life. We know something of the dangers of hypnotic suggestion; and it is not difficult to realise the potency of suggestion, when there is an unshaken belief in the ability of a man to invoke the aid of the powers of evil.

How did Nbai come to have this bag in his possession? The explanation is equally interesting from a psychological viewpoint, if all other viewpoints must be excluded.

The result of years of residence with me and continued teaching was that Nbai was freed from the usual superstitions of the Mawken. He had outlived them. The change was physically evident, as his face bore no trace of a hunted expression, his glance was frank and fearless, and his bearing was that of one

who had "found his manhood." When he revisited Mergui with me each quarter he was the centre of an interested and admiring crowd of Mawken. He had many things to tell—things he had seen, things he had heard, and things he had done. The abandonment of the opium habit had naturally worked wonders in his physical condition. When he returned to find that his father-in-law was dead, he made inquiries as to the whereabouts of the Wicked Man, and he followed him up. I would have given much to have seen that meeting! The Wicked Man was overmatched. Here was a fellow-Mawken who showed not the slightest sign of fear, and, moreover, a Mawken who was, comparatively, a moral and spiritual giant. The Wicked Man was simply cowed. He submissively acceded to the demand to hand over his "whole bag of tricks," and Nbai was thus able to delay, if not to prevent, the ills intended for those other Mawken the sand of whose footprints had not yet been worked into an image. After this and other experiences of happenings amongst peoples whose psychological and spiritual conditions conduce to such things, I can see some meaning in the story of an arrest in which one narrator mentions that those who were about to make the arrest "went backward and fell to the ground."

No blows were struck by Nbai. Of this there was ample evidence. My great regret in connection with this matter is that I was unable to make an important experiment, and to ascertain what eventually happened

to the Wicked Man. Such knowledge will by this time be difficult of attainment.

I am gratified that, as with the opium question, Nbai was able to exercise a proper *self*-discipline. (But I should give an entirely erroneous impression did I not express my honest conviction that he did it not in his own unaided strength.)

Below the verandah in which our conversation had taken place, after breakfast, several Mawken were congregated. It had become usual for the Mawken to make inquiries of the times of my arrival, and for some of them either to meet the steamer or to come up to the circuit house to greet me. To these people we went down, and I asked them to go with me down the town to the smaller jetty, near to which, as I had ascertained, some others were assembled in their *kabang*. Nbai and I led the way, and the Mawken trailed after us. Near to that jetty stood a large pipul-tree, under the shade of which I took my stand; then calling all the Mawken there to me I told them that I had something important to say. I referred to the story I had heard from Nbai, and showed them the bag and its contents. Then I went on to explain that if they did not believe what the Wicked Man said to them nothing would happen.

This was not understood. Several of the Mawken shook their heads dolefully, and exclaimed: "*Chang ha!*" ("He understands *not*!") Someone broke in to explain that she had lost her husband; another said that he had

lost his brother, and yet another that she had lost her son. I listened patiently, and when they had finished speaking I said, speaking to them in Mawken:

"I am not saying that I do not believe you. I *do* believe you. I know that these things about which you tell me can happen. And I believe that they have happened as you say. I want you to know, however, that when the Wicked Man tells anyone he will fall ill, if the man *does not believe him* he will *not* fall ill. And when the Wicked Man tells anyone he will die, if that man does not believe him he will not die."

My general impression was, as I looked at their faces, that they did not perceive my meaning; so I turned to Nbai and asked him to try to make things more comprehensible to them. He spoke earnestly and at some length, and, by such exclamations as "*Amon!*" ("Good!") I was led to conclude that some had at last followed my meaning. This alfresco conference broke up with expressions of genuine satisfaction, mingled with a deep concern. The latter was occasioned by my assuring them that when next I visited Mergui I should go out into the islands in search of the Wicked Man, insist upon his taking sand from my footprint, work it into an image and call upon the evil spirit to do his worst. I knew full well that it was a course of action not devoid of some risks, because auto-suggestion may work positively when one seeks to exclude all but a negative. And had I fallen ill the result would have been disastrous!

But, as it transpired, I made no other trip to the Mergui Archipelago. To my great disappointment then, and ever since, a train of circumstances led to my not returning to work in Burma for a second period; and in order to make things easier for the man who was to fill my post when my time expired, I exchanged with him for my last three months, and allowed him and his bride to come into the parsonage at Maulmein, instead of setting up house for three months at Bassein and at the end of that time moving over.

I left the Mawken looking for my return. What can they have thought of me since? My successor felt no call to include this work in the work of the chaplaincy—it entailed learning the Mawken language. He, as it happened, held the post for about two years, and there have been several changes since.

The incident I have related is but one of many which occur amongst these Mawken; and one has left them with the knowledge that, without knowledge and without help, they are still subject to such consequences of their ignorance and superstitions.

From the psychologist's point of view, it is an interesting instance of how Suggestion works.

CHAPTER XXV

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

EVEN in these days of Comparative Studies it is still advisable to write an *apologia* for making comparisons. It is, we may say, an "accident" that I should have worked in Burma and in British Guiana. And it is an "accident" that I had to learn, and to commit to writing, the Mawken language and the Makuchi language. And comparisons made between the two peoples may be said to be fortuitous. Let all this be admitted; yet it remains true that such a comparison—however fortuitous—brings to light some things which would not otherwise be noticed. We have to-day comparative philology, comparative religion, and all the comparative work of anthropology.

I would begin with a strikingly simple comparison.

The Mawken of Burma-Malaya find that the season of the monsoon is the favourable season for them. In place of torrents of rain, high winds and cyclones, bringing in their train discomfort, starvation and even death, they enjoy fair weather, freedom of movement over the waters, and opportunities for obtaining the necessaries of life. In counting years they employ the word used for the good season, or summer months. They do not keep long count of years and cannot tell their exact age. It is easy to recollect,

however, for a few years, how many "summers" a little child has lived. There is a word for Rainy Season, and there is a word for Fine Season. No word to combine both periods exists, as a separate term. So the word for the Fine Season comes to indicate the full year, just because the age of the little one is counted by that little one's *Fine* Seasons.

To the Makuchi the months of fine weather are the months of scarcity. Their provisions do not yield plentifully, and sometimes they run very short of all but farine. During the Rainy Season there is abundance. The field, or forest-clearing, yields in abundance bananas, pine-apples, maize, yams, tannias and cassava. Game is driven from the nullahs, often being flooded out. Fish come up in numbers to spawn, and spread, with the floods, over the country. It is, indeed, especially towards the latter end, a time of plenty. Now the Makuchis have a word for Dry Season and a word for Wet Season. In counting the years of their children they use the term for the Wet Season. Being on land, and not on sea, the rain-storms and high winds do not endanger their lives, and, having wind-proof houses, they can be safe when they wish to be under cover. The Mawken "*shelter*," on the boat, has no wall and no door. It is simply a rain-splitter, with the gable-ends open.

In England it has been customary to speak of children as being so many summers old, in such expressions as: "She was a little maid of seven summers."

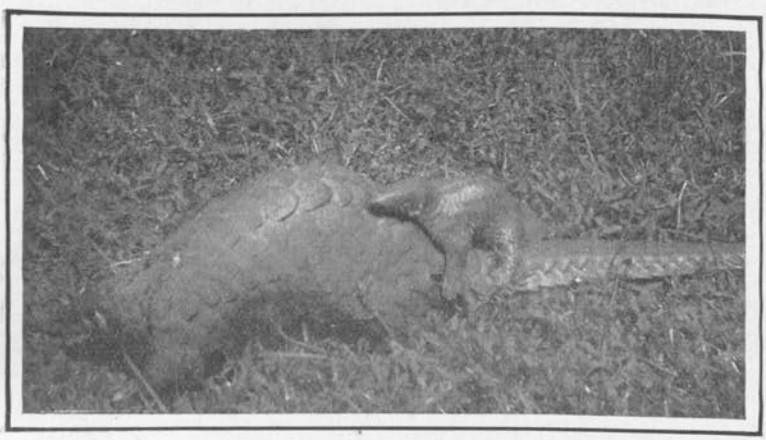
I am not myself in a position to continue the comparison. So far as I can begin it, taking the cases of peoples in the East and in the West, it is seen that even such diverse people as the Mawken and Makuchi agree in ignoring the unpleasant period of the year and in marking time by the period which, in each case, is the Time of Plenty.

In Religion the Mawken had no conception of God. Their language has no word for God, the Ultimate Source, the Creator. The word *Thida*, now used for God, has come to them from the Siamese, and it has come within comparatively modern times. In Siamese, however, Thida is the name of the wife of Brahma, so I am informed by a Siamese student in England. It would be interesting, therefore, to learn how the term came to be used of the Creator by the Mawken. There were the spirits, who could help or hurt. And in the *micha-blen's* incantation we have the name of the chief of the spirits who can help. This spirit is supplicated, but not adored. There is nothing in the nature of worship. And there are no tabus. Evil spirits are not worshipped; they may be avoided or propitiated, or their aid sought in working harm. Thida is still afar off. He (note the sex pronoun) will not harm, and he may be ignored in ordinary life.

The Makuchi has the term *Pêku Thekatong*, meaning the Great Spirit. The word *thekatong* is ordinarily used of *shadow*, as well as of the inmost of Man's supposed quadruple personality. The Makuchi idea

A Sorcerer's "Bag of Tricks."

This grass bag of the *Micha bap* or witch-doctor contains bits of rag and paper and a bamboo bottle, with the lid off, each containing sand from a man's footprints; also a wax image of the person whom he desires to influence, wound round with string.



Pangolin or Scaly Ant-eater

With her young one perched astride on her tail. The distribution of this curious animal on the earth's surface is both peculiar and interesting.

of personality, I should explain, is that of a quadrinity, not a trinity. The Great Spirit, being harmless, is ignored, and there is no worship, and no supplication. There are evil spirits, to be avoided, and to be warded off by charms, the smearing of anatto over the body being especially efficacious. Anatto symbolises blood. The help of good spirits may be sought, as by the *peazung*[1]; and well-disposed genii may also be invoked.

In both cases, Mawken and Makuchi, "Creation Stories" bear the marks of comparatively modern times; and in both cases they fail to go back to "the beginning."

The comparison, although not exhaustive, is interesting in showing that, so far as language and folklore go, these two very different peoples managed without a conception of God, for a long period at least, in the distant past—the period in which their languages were being evolved. The age-long belief in spiritual beings seems to have satisfied the "instinct" for communion with "powers beyond us," powers not subject to death. And, in both cases, the belief in the persistence of the human spirit after the death of the body would seem to be as old as the language. Now that we realise that Adam and Eve (Eve being the later name of the female, or child-bearing, Adam—the original pair, male and female, both being at first called Adam) were the typical founders of the Semite race, and now that it is no longer a sin to wonder if humanity sprang

[1] *Peazung* = wizard.

from a single pair, or from several pairs, in different parts of the world, these early ideas of spiritual beings and the persistence of human life are of even greater interest than they were before. Although we may "wonder" or surmise much, we cannot settle the question now.

With regard to language. Many are the times I have been questioned as to the size and quality of the vocabularies of the Mawken and the Makuchi. A general impression in England seems to be that peoples who live a simple life of this kind must possess a very poor language. The supposition is reasonably based upon the thought that the less complex the life, and the less of science and art, the fewer will be the words needed to express names for objects and terms for abstractions. We might be led to reason that while this is likely of a people which has not developed much, a people which has got into a "backwash," it would not be improbable to find that a people now living a simple life, descended from ancestors who lived a more complex life, would, in spite of their simple life of to-day, retain a large vocabulary. If this line of reasoning be sound, it would appear that the Mawken belong to the former category and the Makuchi to the latter.

It has already been shown that the Mawken language knows neither inflection nor conjugation. *Chi* may be I, me or my. *Lakow* may be go, shall go or went, and may be first, second or third person, and either singular or plural. It is the simplest form of language

of which one can conceive. And yet it boasts of a term in oceanography which we had not thought of coining, to which reference has already been made.

Makuchi, on the other hand, is a remarkably rich language. While it lacks the dual, it possesses a fuller verb than Greek. It has an ordinary imperative, such as may be used by a parent to a child. It has an imperative which brooks no alternative, which is very useful in times of stress and danger; it has imperatives of nearness and imperatives of distance. The termination of a verb will tell a Makuchi whether he is to light the camp-fire where *he* happens to be, or where *you* happen to be. The imperative termination will explain to a man whether he is to remain where he is and call someone whose presence you need, or go forth and call that person. To the Makuchi a boat is neither in the water nor on the water, so there is a special preposition. So, too, a person is not in a doorway, under a doorway, nor through a doorway; again there is a special preposition. A bird on a branch is not in a tree nor upon a tree, it is "without" the tree (outside its bark). In place of relative pronouns there are prepositional pronouns and verb-participle pronouns, which allow of nice distinctions which cannot be made in English without a great deal of circumlocution. There are words, or names, for that which no longer exists among them; such is the word for "trained soldier." It is not a word for "warrior" or "brave," as an individual, but the term for a man definitely

trained with other men to fight. As the Mawken have taken words from the Burmese and the Malay, so the Makuchi have adopted words from the Germans, through the Dutch, and from the Portuguese, through the Brazilians. The word *Siundaka* is, evidently, Sonntag (Sunday).

In another respect, a comparison, though fortuitous, is enlightening. It is a subject upon which we have much evidence in these days. The number of diseases was limited. This number has been increased by contact with civilised peoples, and the new diseases have played, and continue to play, havoc with the peoples of primitive, or "uncivilised," life. Small-pox is from time to time a scourge amongst Mawken and Makuchi. Phthisis is working havoc amongst the Makuchi, being "assisted," though, as we know, not caused, by the taking to European dress. So far the Mawken seem to have escaped this contamination. I need go no further in this matter, save to mention that, as with the Makuchi, so with the Mawken, monogamy is the rule. The Mawken would seem never to make an exception, though occasionally a Makuchi will take a second and younger wife while the old one is yet alive. In both cases, Mawken and Makuchi, promiscuity and harlotry are being introduced by the "civilised" peoples, with the attendant horrors. From these things the Mawken, being so timid of all strangers, are so far *almost* immune.

With regard to diet, Mawken and Makuchi recognise (when they are obtainable) three regular meals a day,

one of which is but a light repast. The preparations for these, and the partaking of them, are easy matters, and the complications of the commissariat department of the European home are unknown. Fish and game, frizzled or boiled (nothing fried and nothing baked), with rice (Mawken) or farine (Makuchi), with occasional wild honey and some fruits, roots and vegetables, comprise the menu, which may be read from the top to-day and from the bottom to-morrow. Like most American Indians, of whom one has read, the Makuchis will sometimes gorge. I have not heard of an instance in which the Mawken have been able to do so, should they have had the inclination. I never found Nbai and the other Mawken with me attempt to overeat.

This reminds me that Europeans have often cursed a tropical climate as being unhealthy, or a tropical country as being a "white man's grave," when all the time neither the climate nor the country is to blame. The white man's dress, the white man's diet and the white man's undisciplined life have been chief causes of trouble, together with the innocent ignoring of the "contemptible little mosquito." To Europeans tropical heat is enervating, and, apart from this, neither climate (as such) nor country (as such) should be blamed. We know that colour is protective from the actinic rays of the sun; and when we make allowance for the white man's lack of this protection (during early days, anyhow) we are forced to inquire, when we study Makuchi or Mawken, why they have persisted, and would have

multiplied exceedingly but for "accidental" influences which have nothing to do with climate or country.

From the serious to the trifling, I would refer once more to tinned salmon. When the Mawken, on the occasion of our picnic, took the plates of rice and salmon to the water's edge and solemnly wiped the salmon into the sea, it was natural that I should have recalled my first meeting with the Akawatho Indians (*Aka wuratho* = Heaven-man), upon the upper reaches of the Masaruni, in Guiana, on my trip to the diamond fields there in 1902. On that occasion it was a case of boiled rice and tinned salmon, some of which we gave to the Akawathos. They took the plates, looked at the salmon and quietly wiped it into the river. Evidently experience has taught that strange foods are to be avoided.

And one final comparison. It did not occur to me at that time to question Nbai as to the Mawken idea of the gender, or nature, of stars, when he said, in looking at the "flying stars," that they were going to lie down with wife-stars. It did not occur to me that there was anything but picturesque language in it. On taking up Makuchi and doing translation work my eyes were opened to a possible misconception amongst the Mawken. Usually my wife and I wrote hymns and composed the melodies for them when we were working amongst the Makuchis. Sometimes we gave them a version of one of our hymns. One of the hymns selected for a version was, "Praise the Lord, ye Heavens, adore Him." When I came to the passage

which runs, "Sun and moon, rejoice before Him," I found that the stanza scanned better if, in Makuchi, I rendered it as, "Sun, moon and stars, rejoice before Him." And when I came to translate the word "stars" I found that in Makuchi the plural would be, "*Chirikê thamê.*" "*Chirikê*" means "star," and "*thamê*" is the plural. But my knowledge of the language, at that time, told me that while *gŏng* (or, for euphony, *kŏng*) is the plural for inanimates, such as *têgŏng* (rocks), *thamê* is the plural of animates, such as *baka thamê* (cows), *kăriwinăthamê* (fowls), and *poinga thamê* (wild pigs). This led me to inquire as to the Makuchi *idea* of a star.

"Do you think that a star is a living thing—living like a fowl, a cow or a peccary?" I asked.

"Yes," came the reply; "it *moves.*"

The conversation which followed need not be given here. It is enough to say that I convinced the Makuchis that their idea was wrong and, in consequence, their plural was wrong. They, then, agreed that their language in this respect must be corrected; and now the plural for star is not *Chirikê thamê.* It is *Chirikê gŏng.*

I am left wondering!

What is the Mawken idea of a star?

CHAPTER XXVI

"SCIENCE & ART" AMONGST THE MAWKEN

ONE night as we were sitting out upon the balcony which extended in front of my parsonage at Maulmein several meteorites, or "shooting stars," were seen. I turned to Nbai, who was sitting on the floor beside me, and asked him what he thought about them. He entered into an excited explanation, the gist of which was to explain that these "flying stars" (so he called them) were on their way to lie down to rest with female stars. The word for female is the same as that for wife, and it is possible that I should translate his words as "wife stars." The idea behind this "explanation" eluded me, and I am not able to express an opinion as to whether or not the Mawken regard the stars as living beings, with a life similar to that of birds and animals. This idea exists amongst other peoples, and, in order not to perpetuate a wrong notion about the nature of stars, I found it necessary to correct the plural form in a language the users of which regarded stars as living things similar to cows and fowls.

The Mawken possess no pseudo-science of astrology. They have not grasped the fact that every part of the vast universe is, in a wonderful way, dependent upon,

and influenced by, every other part; much less have they thought of connecting the appearance of a star, or other celestial object, with special influences upon the birth of a particular child. They have not yet learned from the Burmese to cast horoscopes before a name is selected and given to a child, and the giving of a name does not call for the exercise of any mathematical gymnastics, as amongst the Burmese. It would appear that often they pick up names in the streets of Mergui and apply them to their offspring, regardless of stars and dates. So one may find amongst the names of Mawken people and children some taken from Burmese, others from Chinese, some from English, and others from Indians or Malays.

Further conversation upon this and upon other occasions revealed the fact that the Mawken's Science of Astronomy is very small. We can recognise the stars which they call "the fighting cocks." The regular appearance of certain stars is observed; and the position of the moon in the sky and of Orion's Belt are guides to direction. It may be unnecessary to explain that the geocentric theory of the universe prevails, and colours all their conceptions.

Geography is "a very little thing" with them. The world consists of the Mergui Archipelago and the sea, with islands far to the west (the Nicobar), India to the north, other islands to the south, and Burma, China and Siam to the east. Their ignorance cannot be regarded as blameworthy, much less can it be taken

as an indication of lack of intelligence. It is simply due to the lack of opportunities for acquiring more extensive knowledge. Having no literature, they cannot read of these things for themselves. Those who take knowledge to them find that they assimilate it with avidity.

Of shells and fish there is little which can be known by observation which they do not know. That they should have names for the various kinds of oysters, crabs and shrimps is not at all remarkable; but that they should be careful to distinguish the numerous small shell-fish and the tiny denizens of the sea is noteworthy. It means that they have an extensive nomenclature; and this is accompanied by intimate knowledge of the species. A conchologist would be able to have a delightful and profitable time were he to tour the Archipelago in company with such a Mawken as was Nbai. Scientists might, with advantage, make use of such people as these, and unless their services are secured soon they may ere long be unobtainable. The Mawken know *where* the various things are to be found, and they know the best ways of securing them when wanted. It was only because I was not a conchologist that I failed to secure and record a mass of information, and neglected to make a collection which would probably have brought some new species to light.

In a churchyard in a small village in Suffolk there is a monument inscribed to Orlando Whistlecraft, "Weather prophet and poet." Tradition has it that his brother knew it would be wet when the prophet

said it would be fine, and was safe in leaving his umbrella at home when his brother said it would rain. The Mawken have a better knowledge of weather than that! Where the seasons are regular, prophecy, in a general way, is easier than in places where people have only "samples of weather." When squally weather was about, the Mawken, owing to years of close observation, rendered keener because upon their judgments their very life might depend, could give forecasts which were often astonishing. Many were the times when I consulted Nbai as to the advisability of taking a change of shoes and an umbrella and waterproof if invited out to dinner; and several times did he amaze me by an assurance, in spite of lowering clouds, that there would be no rain until just before midnight, which would allow of my getting home quite safely after dinner. His assurance was, upon every occasion, justified. Sometimes it would be the case that I would feign disregard for a few fleecy clouds, and he would warn me that rain would fall before I should return home. He was correct, whichever way he prognosticated.

Botanical knowledge covers a wild field, but it is superficial. The names of numerous trees, shrubs and plants can be obtained from these people; and they know which are the durable and which are the soft woods. They have learned which barks are required for the tannery at Mergui; and they know which trees to cut down for the keels of their boats.

They can tell which are the deciduous and which are evergreen trees. They can identify trees and plants by their leaves, without requiring to see the growth itself. These are, I think, the limits of their botanical knowledge. I began a collection of pressed leaves; and it was in making this collection that I discovered the long list of names they possess. My next step was to have been the noting of trees and shrubs which bore edible fruits, and the listing of edible roots.

They did not appear to know of edible fungi, and it would seem to be likely that their ignorance on the subject is as vast as that of the average person in England, who would assure you that the Giant Puff Ball is poisonous, and would be horrified if you suggested their eating a Ruddy Warted Cap, a Parasol Mushroom or a Boletus.

In the neglect to inform aboriginal peoples, in time, many rare and valuable trees and plants are destroyed by them, in their ignorance. Even a little knowledge may be a useful thing in this respect. Living such an unsettled life, the Mawken naturally are limited in the amount of damage they do, yet they cannot avoid doing some. Burma is an orchid country, the home of *dendrobiums*, and rare orchids may be found on some of the islands of the Archipelago. An orchid is of no value to a Mawken in his present condition of life, and with his existing ignorance of botany as a science.

The Science of Comparative Religion is beginning to dawn upon some of them. It must not be assumed,

however, that a Mawken boy whose head gives evidence of the adoption of the tonsure of a low-caste Hindu possesses any knowledge of caste. He has but paid a visit to a street barber—a Hindu—squatting by the roadside and plying his trade alfresco, and has been marked in this way according to the barber's ideas of the fitness of things. Or a Mawken man, a copyist of the roadside barber, may have, in his innocence, inflicted this mark upon him. Contact with Buddhists must be puzzling to the Mawken, who are Deists (though not Theists); and they may, unwittingly, become idolaters, which the understanding Buddhists are not.

It has already been shown that they have nothing which can be termed a Science of Medicine. And surgery is wholly unknown to them. Some of the late Sir Victor Horsley's surgical feats would have astonished the Mawken beyond measure. Bone-setting is not dreamed of; and broken limbs are left to take care of themselves. Scientists might make some use of the Mawken in getting them to locate and to collect medicinal plants and barks.

To suggest a Science of Chemistry is futile.

It is knowledge which the Mawken need. They have the capacity for acquiring it, and they quickly learn how to apply it. They are, some of them, within very sight of certain of the applied sciences. They are looking through a glass door, of which we keep the key.

With regard to some things they possess the

knowledge, the value of which they do not understand. Other knowledge they have, which they know how to apply.

When I am asked, "Have the Mawken any science?" it is difficult to give an answer. So far as "the sciences" are concerned, the Mawken are in the innocent condition of not knowing that they know. In other respects, they are unaware of their ignorance.

As with Science, so with Art. Carving is of the most elementary kind, and even in this form it is done only in wood. The *katoi ka-e* and the tray of the *micha-blen* are the only carved objects I could find. And it is rather stretching the term carving to apply it to the former at all. Although the Mawken have been diving for pearl oysters for generations, they have not developed an art in the fashioning and engraving of the beautiful shells. This is done to-day by the Burmese and Chinese of Mergui; and the Mawken are ignorant of the fact that were they to acquire this art they would add considerably to their earnings. One may buy in Mergui dessert-plates of mother-of-pearl, cut out from the large shells and finely chased with artistic designs. The Mawken dispose of the "raw material" at a ridiculously low figure. The bows and the stern of a *kabang* cannot be distinguished until the shelter is put on, and then it marks the stern. There is not the slightest attempt to decorate the bows, in carving or in colour.

I found no colours in dyes or in paints in use. The

katoi ka-e are daubed with some black stuff, and that was the only "colour" for decorative purposes which I saw in use. Orange and red could easily be obtained from trees and plants in the jungle: the roving life of the people has caused them to neglect these things. Perhaps in the past their ancestors knew how to make colours. Their mat-work makes no attempt at design in colour, and one does not find such a simple thing as a piece of bi-coloured plaited work. Designing is an art unknown. If they ever practised drawing figures to represent objects, animate or inanimate, they have given up the practice. When one knows the proclivity of little children, in Western and Eastern lands alike, for scribbling, it is all the more remarkable that even the grown-up children of the Mawken are not addicted to the habit. The straight lines on the *katoi ka-e* result from the ordinary observance of straight tree trunks and straight saplings. Curves are, the world over, suggested by the heavenly vault. And the sun and moon and the stars suggest circles and dots. The wavelets of the sea easily suggest undulating lines. And this is about as far as Mawken art, so far as drawing is concerned, has arrived.

And since there is so little of either Science or of Art, there is not much to be said about either in any description of the Mawken.

CHAPTER XXVII

FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

WE have become accustomed to the remark, whenever a discussion takes place as to the future in store for the remnant of a primitive people, backward in civilisation, "They will die out." It seems to be possible for people to make this remark without even a pang of regret. Can it be that there lingers a trace of the idea of a previous generation which, acting upon the thought that the best thing to do with aboriginals in Australia was to rid the earth of them, organised hunting parties, as fox-hunts are organised to-day in this country, to kill them off? Are we content that the world should be rid of them? Those of us who know the story of the Tierra del Fuegans cannot view the prospect of the extinction of a people with equanimity.

During my census-taking I found that some of the Mawken took fright at my seeking to record their names, as someone had put it into their heads that when their names were secured the men would be called up for military service! That was a future to which they could look forward with no pleasure. I had much work in assuring these people that I had no such sinister designs whatever.

Those who have given thought to the facts I have been able to record will, I think, have arrived at the conclusion that unless the Mawken are definitely helped to develop on their own lines, and are afforded effective protection from oppressive conditions of life and work, they will be assimilated by the Chinese and Burmese in the north, and by the Malays in the south. Intermarrying with Burmans, Chinese and Malays has already begun. These, being dominating races in numbers and in character, will not be absorbed by the Mawken. Already it is noticeable that the Mawken in the north are adopting Burmese dress and style. The men are taking to wearing the *lungyi*, and the women copy the Burmese women even to the manner of doing the hair in a coil at the top of the head. Some of the men, also, have adopted the *koungboung*, or head-dress of the Burmans, the hair being allowed to grow long for the purpose. The Mawken head of the little "settlement" of four huts, on Cantor, or Dala, Island, of whom I had a photograph taken by a Burmese photographer, could not be distinguished from a Burman in dress.

Together with the dress, they are adopting the speech. Nearly all the men who visit Mergui pick up a smattering of Burmese. Some speak it quite well, if we overlook carelessness with regard to the tones. Such Mawken will address one as *Thakin*, a Burmese equivalent for Sir, instead of as *Micha*, which is the Mawken word of similar meaning. It is useful for

them to learn Burmese, as it is the language of the bazaars, in which they obtain such things as they can afford, when they receive coins, in place of negotia, in payment for their labours or their products.

Absorption by the Malays, who were formerly their tormentors, may be even more rapid. The Mawken, owing to their past associations with the Malays, by no means always of a pleasant nature, have taken many Malay words into their language.

Intermarriage with the Chinese traders is resulting in a mixed race, and in the adoption of Chinese habits. The Chinese of these parts speak Burmese, for convenience, and the Mawken take over Burmese words from them.

Perhaps we may be tempted to feel that, as they are not being shot down, all is well if they are being peaceably assimilated, or absorbed. This cannot be accomplished in a generation; and in the meantime some thousands of these people are being left to live a life of great privation, a life of fear, a life of sadness.

My knowledge of their language and my scant knowledge of their folklore lead me to wish ardently that those things which they have to contribute to the knowledge of the past should be rescued ere they are lost; while my experience of their capacity for development impels me to desire that this capacity should be developed to the full.

In another direction the Mawken may be absorbed. In the Renong district of Siam, just across the Packchan

river, which divides Burma from Siam, dredging for tin is being developed, and tin mines are being opened up. Mawken are induced to work in these; and I found that Mawken labour was being drawn away from the Mergui Archipelago into Siam. *The Burma Critic* took up this point, when I had mentioned it in my report, and suggested that it would be bad policy to allow the Mawken to drift off in this manner, while we did nothing for them.

Not only do I value the Mawken for their very primitive language—no inflections and no conjugations —and their untold tales of the past; but I know that their knowledge of the present is of much worth. As a people they know the Archipelago islands and sea "inside out." They are the people who can develop the almost unknown resources of the islands. They can stand the climatic conditions. They are a simple, and they may become a delightful, people. I found them adaptable and quick to learn.

Rubber-growing and coco-nut cultivation have been begun, in a small way, upon some of the islands. There is some tin, and I have seen a piece of silver ore brought in from one of the islands. The rubber plantations could be extensively developed, and the Mawken, if a considerate scheme of work were allowed until they could become used to a more settled life, would become workers and might, like the Chinese, become planters themselves. They know a good deal about insect life, and they could soon be taught to deal with pests. At

coco-nut growing they could succeed, though on the larger islands they would have to find ways of circumventing the wild pigs, which are destructive of the planted nuts, and the mischievous monkeys. From the growing of coco-nuts, they could go on to the making of coco-nut oil, for which there is a great demand by shipping companies, as it burns well in the "lights." And coco-nut fibre-work might be taken up, with good results, financially and otherwise. Coco-nut trees usually take five years to yield; but on an island off Bokpyin I was shown some trees which were said to yield nuts at the end of three years.

I do not see that we can regard with indifference even a small race within the Empire; and I am of opinion that the Mawken can be saved from extinction, if we will take but a little trouble. It seems to me that the Government of Burma should regard the care of the Mawken as a part of its duty, and see that an Industrial Settlement is started amongst them. Such a settlement must, of course, have organisation—that is to say, it must be worked upon a definite plan. It must, however, be entirely free from officialism. We English people still confuse autocracy with authority, and our methods are frequently wrong on this account. It is a matter which calls for this passing reference, as any steps taken to ameliorate the present deplorable condition of the Mawken are doomed to failure unless it is recognised clearly that while there must be leading, there must be no driving.

Another question which must be considered when thinking of the possible future of these Sea Gypsies is that of our penal system. There have been travesties of justice throughout our Empire, on account of our having applied our laws and their penal clauses before we have taught peoples. I could give a *striking* instance of this, from personal knowledge of the facts. Many students of humanity have come to be convinced that *penal* measures are wrong, and that they mar character. Even where they may be claimed as being a deterrent to others, they are admittedly useless to reform character and to cultivate self-discipline, upon which basis alone the world can be secure. Primitive people, like the Mawken, have no courts of law. To the Mawken the sudden application of law would be demoralising, since law, in order to try to be fair, must of necessity be mechanical; so in spite of its intention it is often in its application far removed from justice. The application of our marriage laws is a case in point, and on this subject I have important evidence. The publication of some of this evidence secured the passing of a special Ordinance in one of our colonies. (This Ordinance dealt with the matter as it affected some aboriginal Indians in South America.)

With such passing reference to questions which will arise as soon as we begin to see and act upon our responsibility to the Mawken, I shall pass on to a day-dream which has been cherished for years.

In this dream I see the Mergui Archipelago, one

of the beauty spots of the East, not denuded of its jungle and laid bare, but planted with flourishing settlements laid out with a proper attention to æsthetics. There would be no clearing of all the trees and bushes from the water's edge. The beauty of the bays would be preserved. The few settlements of Malays, Karens and Chinese, with those of the Burmese in the north, would be left undisturbed. New settlements would be made for and by the Mawken, divided into village areas, with their own *Micha Ådă* (or Headmen). They would work in rubber plantations of which they themselves might be the owners. I can see picturesque palm-thatched and palm-walled houses (no bricks and slates and corrugated iron) dotted amongst the graceful coco-nut trees. I can see garden patches well stocked with bananas, pine-apples, ochroes, maize and sorrel—to name but a few of the possible things. Maize and banana flour will be made and used. On the suitable lands there will be quins of paddy and plantations of cotton. Goats will be bred, and kept to supply milk for the children and "real goat mutton" for the adults. Stocks of good poultry will be reared, and will supply nourishing food in eggs and flesh. Rest-houses, in keeping with the settlements, will be dotted here and there, and be available for officials on tour, or for visitors to the islands. The show places, such as the marble-encircled lagoon in Elephant Island, and the stalactite caverns elsewhere, will be preserved. The fisheries will be extended and conserved. Myriads

of fish come to the Archipelago to spawn, and their young may be seen in massed formation in the shallower bays. Shark-fishing will become an industry, and its valuable products be exported. The Mawken boats, while retaining their characteristic features, will be improved; and the Mawken themselves, so used to the sea, will move about as freely as before, without, however, the impulse of fear. I can see Rangoon-wearied officials taking furlough in the Archipelago, enjoying its cooler atmosphere and its refreshing breezes, and revelling in fishing and yachting, in season. Short leave, after a bout of fever at Minbu, might become a very pleasant thing. And the Mawken would soon learn to man a yacht. Their knowledge of the waters and the products of the sea will be invaluable.

It would be a delightful spot in which to make an experiment in development, in accord with the now known principles of evolution, and the sympathetic understanding of a primitive people which has resulted from the Science of Anthropology. We should, perhaps, gain from the practical application of an ideal more than we should give. And, in these days of Garden Cities and Model Villages, such an experiment as that of my daydream could not be dismissed as Utopian and impossible.

The alternative to definite measures must be the absorption of the Mawken by the more dominant races, and the placing of one more race in the category of the Mohicans and the dodo.

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